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Final Project Report

Public Policy and Faith-Based Organizations: A Survey of Social Services Delivery by African American Religious Organizations In The Atlanta Metropolitan Area

September 21, 2001

Georgia A. Persons, Project Director, Georgia Institute of Technology
Allison Calhoun-Brown, Georgia State University

A report of The Center for The Study of Social Change, Ivan Allen College, Georgia Institute of Technology. Prepared for The Nonprofit Sector Research Fund, The Aspen Institute, Washington, D.C.

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INTRODUCTION

This is the final report for Project # 99-NSRF-18, **"Public Policy and Faith-Based Organizations: A Survey of social Services Delivery by African American Religious Organizations in the Atlanta Metropolitan Area,"** funded by the Nonprofit Sector Fund of the Aspen Institute, Washington, D.C. The initial researchers on this project included Georgia A. Persons, Ph.D. As Project Director and Ronald Bayor, Ph.D. as Sr. Research Associate, both of the Georgia Institute of Technology. The substantive research on this project was conducted by Dr. Georgia Persons and Dr. Allison Calhoun-Brown of Georgia State University. The latter two researchers are solely responsible for the findings of this research project and the contents of this report. This project was carried out under the auspices of The Center for The Study of Social Change, Ivan Allen College, Georgia Tech.

Study Context and Rationale

This study was begun within the context of consideration of questions about the extent to which a policy provision known as "Charitable Choice" was actually being engaged by the African American church community as a mechanism for supporting social service delivery. Especially since Chairtable Choice was a part of the Welfare Reform Act (PL 104-193, The Personal Responsibility and Work

Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996), and given the disproportionately high levels of African Americans among recipients of traditional welfare benefits, it was reasonable to expect a heightened interest in Charitable Choice within the African American church community. Aside from perceived constitutional conflicts regarding the longstanding principle of separation of church and state, Charitable Choice represents an interesting policy idea, that of effectively enlisting local church congregations as implementers of social policy. This is, quite arguably, the main innovation inherent in Charitable Choice as a policy initiative. It would, for the first time, enlist individual local congregations in a distinct policy implementation role.

There has long been an established role for major religious denominations in social policy implementation (actually, historically, religious denominational organizations preceeded the involvement of government in social service provision), and this role has been carried out by thoroughly bureaucratic organizations such as National Catholic Charities, The Jewish Federation, and the like. What Charitable Choice does is to "level the playing field" by prohibiting government from discriminating against local church congregations and to award contracts to these organizations along with local charitable agencies and private firms for social service provision. This new policy provision would thus enlist organizations which had been previously excluded from this arena of activities on the basis that they were pervasively sectarian in their orientation.

Charitable Choice thus holds the potential for being a major innovation in terms of social policy implementation. Some would argue that churches can play a

unique role in select areas of social policy implementation, primarily because of the pervasive conception of churches as special mediating institutions or more user-friendly organizations, especially in regard to certain communities of citizens. Additionally, some would argue that churches are able to bring a special palliative ingredient to facilitating social service provision, that of "the faith factor" (a yet not well defined element). Thus one can discern as an undercurrent to the main terms of public debate a relatively unspoken assumption that by enlisting churches in social policy implementation roles, society would reap a sort of lagniappe by the application of "the faith factor" as part of a longterm strategy of individual social redemption and subsequent movement to individual self sufficiency for many of those previously dependent on some form of welfare. Thus for some, Charitable Choice holds great potential for broadbased social reform.

Charitable Choice thus raises a lot of questions and concerns, the primary ones which drive this research are significantly practical in nature and pivot around two complimentary foci: 1. The willingness of local congregations to take on what would be new roles in policy implementation; and 2. Their ability to effectively handle the bureaucratic demands, and public expectations, of sizeable and sustained social service social service delivery activities. This research begins to illuminate these kind of questions which continue to retain currency within the context of the Bush Administration's proposals for an expanded Faith-Based policy initiative.

Like all organizations, churches cannot be fully understood as organizational entities without knowledge and an appreciation for the broader social, institutional,

and cultural context within which they exist. Major portions of this study were designed to shed light on this broader societal/environmental context. Churches generally, and African American churches in particular, are highly complex organizations. Churches are uniquely and at once very much public and private organizations. Thus they occupy unique institutional ground in civil society which has not yet been fully explicated in scholarly terms. Churches as organizations remain greatly misunderstood and underappreciated in much of academia beyond the specific foci of Schools of Divinity. However, there is a growing discourse on churches which embraces scholars from across disciplinary lines and we are proud to be a part of that emergent development. In addition to being scholars (both political scientists), these researchers are lifelong regular churchgoers and active participants in diverse dimensions of African American church life. Additionally, one of us spent a period of four years as an active member of a predominantly white congregation. As scholars and as individuals we have benefitted greatly from all of these exposures.

General Objectives of this Study

The general objectives of this study can be summarized as follows:

1. To investigate the level of awareness of the "Charitable Choice" provision of the Welfare Reform Act of 1996 (give formal title) among local congregational, African American pastors;
2. To investigate the extent of involvement of African American churches in social services delivery activities funded under Charitable Choice or otherwise supported

by federal, state, or local government funds, and/or such services funded by philanthropic foundations. The study also sought to gauge the level of interest of these churches in participating in government or philanthropic funded activities;

3. To investigate how local African American churches organized or made major bureaucratic adaptations to deliver social services and/or charitable outreach activities, the type of services provided and the clienteles served; to explore the range of problems encountered in service delivery, and to gauge the overall effectiveness of church operations devoted primarily to service delivery activities;

4. To be able to provide a kind of profile of the various types of churches which were most likely to be found involved with social services delivery and charitable outreach activities of a given scope and type, and to develop some preliminary theory about the likely determinants of such involvement.

5. To assess the existing organizational capacity of some local church organizations engaged in social service delivery and the willingness of church leaders to take on new or additional social service activities.

A more fulsome picture of the objectives of the study is revealed in the full narrative of this report which is provided below.

Major Findings and Insights

1. All African American local congregations appear to share the charitable impulse and almost all are engaged in some level of activities which one could define as social service delivery and charitable outreach.

2. The greater portion of social services and charitable activities which are engaged

in by these churches are conducted in a significantly ad hoc manner, constituting episodic and seasonally provided services. However, there is a large degree of repetitiveness in these activities such that over time, they constitue a narrowly patterned set of activities. Some churches are engaged in a large array of systematic social service activities, but they are more the exception than the norm.

3. Whatever they do in terms of social service delivery, in the main, African American congregations provide these services alone. These churches receive very little support from any level of government, and almost none from corporate sources. Moreover, these churches are not linked to existent government and charitable funded social service networks. So additionally they receive very little non-financial help in their efforts to help those in need.

4. There are a few African American local congregations which have made major bureaucratic adaptations for the sole purpose of social service delivery. They maintain separate organizational entities which are dedicated to social service delivery. These are mainly mega-churches. These dedicated entities are impressive organizations, both in terms of organizational structure and routines, and overall organizational capacity. Some of these operations are leveraged with government funding, but collectively, these operations are disproportionately supported by church-based resources.

5. Social service activities in African American churches are overwhelmingly volunteer supported enterprises. Some in-roads are being made in involving paid employees, but these activities remain largely a set of activities which are dependent

on volunteer labor.

6. Where there are dedicated social service entities, there are strong indicators of substantial organizational capacity which one would associate with formal bureaucracies and which would be considered prerequisites for engagement in sustainable social service delivery.

7. African American congregational based social service operations are substantially driven by visions and missions which are deeply anchored in spiritual principles. This significantly defines and flavors their orientation. While these operations are responsive to governmental and other regulations, officials tend to see themselves as doing God's work and therefore being primarily accountable to God.

8. There are few theological constraints in the African American church community on involvement in public affairs, thus the vast majority are quite willing to receive government funding for church-based social services if solid funding is provided.

9. In the year 2000, very few of the churches we surveyed had heard of the Charitable Choice initiative (written into law in 1996). This applied as well to individuals who were leaders of major ministerial alliances and other organized groups of ministers. While we might expect that many more are by now aware of the Bush Administration's Faith Based Initiative effort, this finding does illustrate the substantial lag time involved in spreading awareness of major public policy developments to this population.

10. African American ministers and African American churches are a very difficult population to study. It is a population which is particularly not responsive to survey

research methods. This poses a significant constraint and most of all means that effective study of this population will have to be both highly innovative and must anticipate an extended period of time in which to conduct a study.

The Study

Original Research Design and Research Plan

When one decides to conduct a study of African American churches in a given city or metropolitan area or some other jurisdiction, just how does one get started? In designing this study, one of the key concerns we engaged initially was that of defining the geographical and spatial area of concern and appropriate focus. Clearly the City of Atlanta would be a primary focus on the research as it is the major city in the region and indeed in the state of Georgia. (There is no other incorporated city within the region which has prominence, and Atlanta is the largest city in the state.). And, Atlanta has a population which is over 60 percent African American. Yet, when one considers a spatial definition of "the African American community," in Atlanta, one by definition and popular consensus must consider a spatial area which extensively spills beyond the boundaries of the City of Atlanta.

For purposes of this study we decided on a spatial area which included as its primary center the City of Atlanta and the southern portion of adjacent Dekalb County (on the east side of the City of Atlanta). South Dekalb County is contiguous to the City of Atlanta (part of the city lies within Dekalb County), and all of Dekalb County--north and south--are but suburbs of the City of Atlanta. Indeed, given

historically enforced residential segregation and current residential segregation by tradition and habit and resulting voluntary choices, the population of South Dekalb County is almost all African American. The relatively recent growth in the black population in this part of the county constitutes a very interesting story in black suburbanization, and nowhere is this population growth and emergent middle class status more apparent than in the local churches in the South Dekalb County suburbs. We also sought to include corresponding portions of Eastern Cobb County (Cobb County lies on the West side of Atlanta) which have experienced significant growth in its black population, and portions of South Fulton County which lies on the extended South side of the City. This then is mainly what we mean when we refer to "Metropolitan Atlanta." This definition well suits the purposes and foci of this study and this spatial area hosts, by far, the greater portion of African American church congregations to be found within the formal 15 county definition of the Atlanta Metropolitan Area which is used for formal regional planning purposes.

We understood from the beginning that this research would be exploratory, yet we sought to design the study so as to provide significant findings of reasonable validity for the area and population studied. We initially proposed to conduct a survey of African American churches in metropolitan Atlanta utilizing a research design based on a nonprobalistic, purposive sampling technique in which a diverse and reasonably representative, but limited number of African American congregations would be surveyed. Purposive samples are particularly useful for populations of unknown size and in this case, for which no definitive list exists, and

for which the costs od developing a definitive list would be prohibitive. Yet, even a purposive sampling technique requires some knowledge about the proposed population and we initially set about to identify and contact individuals who were knowledgeable about the local Atlanta African American church community who could assist in the development of a listing of churches which would be utilized in this research project. Although churches are integral components of any given community, unlike other institutions within the community such as schools and colleges and hospitals for example, churches are not regulated and are not required to register as such with any record keeping body. Thus, there generally does not exist any comprehensive directory as such of churches (save the telephone directory), and thus no easy way of identifying any specific collection of churches.

Our initial efforts led us to identify and collect a set of informal lists of churches from various sources around the city, lists which had been put together for a range of purposes. For example, we were referred to a list from the Atlanta Mayor's Office Of Community Affairs which was developed primarily for political purposes of designing campaign targets and other political mobilization efforts. This was a very useful list, though it was incomplete and the individual contact information which it contained was considerably outdated. Yet it provided some insights into local congregations which were considered key to political mobilization efforts. Similarly, we obtained an interesting list of churches from the Dekalb County Human Relations Commission, and another overlapping list from the office of the Dekalb County Chief Executive Officer (or County Chairman's office). We obtained

one list from a then ongoing research project from the Interdenominational Theological Center--a local African American Seminary--which was mainly a state-wide list, and some lists which were denominational specific such as a partial listing of Atlanta area churches in the Sixth Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church.

With a set of lists and some suggestions from knowledgeable individuals who provided some "must include" churches we were then faced with the question of a more specific and analytically useful criterion for inclusion of churches in the survey. Specifically, we posed the question of how to categorize churches so as to best inform some sort of analysis. In other words, how might we develop a categorization or typology of churches which would enhance the usefulness of our data and analysis? If we were going to utilize a purposive sample, we wanted it to contain as much rigor or analytical validity as possible within the context of exploratory research.

Also, in establishing categories of churches we wanted to acknowledge the great diversity which is found among black churches in Atlanta. Although denominational categories and distinctions are useful in many ways, we also knew that especially given the objectives of this study, that in many ways such distinctions would not be significant in any definitive manner. Denominational distinctions are further blurred. For example, the differences which one might expect to find in the form, content, and general flavor of liturgical services between Black Baptist churches and African Methodist Episcopal (AME) churches are in many instances

no longer existent as the latter set of congregations have increasingly adopted a more energetic and demonstrably lively style of worship, resulting in attracting large numbers of members who were formerly Baptist. Though the two denominations differ significantly in governance arrangements, such distinctions are not necessarily a matter of concern for many parishioners, nor are the consequences of such distinctions necessarily evident in any manifestations of governance which are visibly or tangibly significant to the congregant in the pew.

Additionally, we reasoned that independent of formal governance arrangements at the denominational level, since so much leeway is in practice given over to the pastor of individual churches that the significance of denominational influences would be substantially muted in determining involvement in social service activities. Thus we did not give any major emphasis on denominational distinctions except to generally observe the distribution of churches across denominational lines in the Atlanta metropolitan area. For example, there are far more Baptist congregations in Atlanta than any other denomination. Even casual observations of an untrained eye convey this fact. We were also quite cognizant of the fact that a significant portion of the of the recent and ongoing black church growth in Atlanta was occurring outside of traditional denominational boundaries. For example, much of this new and most impressive growth is occurring amongst independent Baptist churches. These are churches which carry a Baptist label and which espouse Baptist oriented theological doctrines, but are not formally, in terms of governance authority, associated with the

traditional Baptist denominational organizations and thus are not subject to the control of these denominational organizations. In other words, major black church growth in Atlanta region is occurring in churches which are denominationally independent and are led by highly charismatic pastors. These churches are even more pastor-centered than is the traditional norm in African American churches.

Given the objectives of the study, we clearly wished to differentiate churches in a manner which would be analytically significant. Linked to this, we wanted to facilitate explanation. We wanted to facilitate an understanding of which churches were most likely to be engaged in social services delivery and why, and which churches were not likely to be engaged in such activities and why. Finally, we were concerned as well with the issue of the size of congregations, reasoning that except in some rare cases of congregations of predominantly high income individuals, larger congregations would be better capable of hosting social services activities, both in terms of direct congregational support for such programs, and in terms of organizational capacity and ability to support such programs. Thus, we decided on a threshold of 200 members as the minimum membership size for inclusion of churches in the survey.

Given our knowledge of the Atlanta region, we felt that we could identify a range of African American churches in Atlanta with distinctive defining characteristics, and which because of their defining character were differentially situated within the socio-political fabric of the broader Atlanta black community. And, given the set of concerns and parameters outlined above, we sought to design

our original Purposive Sample around the following categories of churches:

1. Activist Churches - These are churches which are led by ministers who are themselves acknowledged community activists; who use their pulpit to espouse an activist role for the church; and who use their membership base as a source of political mobilization on behalf of community issues. These churches are more likely to assume integral roles in ministerial alliances which are active in support of grass-roots community efforts. The ministers are highly visible and frequently confrontational in their strategic efforts on behalf of community advocacy. Many of these pastors are veterans of the grass-roots level struggles of the civil rights movement and many are members of organizations such as Concerned Black Clergy and RainbowPush Coalition. Most, though not all, of these churches are found in the City of Atlanta.

2. Historic and Prominent Atlanta Churches - These are churches which have historically hosted the historic black middle class in the City of Atlanta. They continue serve as the membership for Atlanta's most prominent "old-line" black families. These churches were also most integrally tied to the core leadership of that group of black leaders which constituted the black half of the infamous "bi-racial coalition" in Atlanta's politics from the late 1930's to the 1960's and the flowering of the civil rights movement.

3. Suburban Prominents - These are churches located in the immediate surrounding suburbs of Atlanta which have risen to prominence in membership

size and socio-political visibility. These are churches which have collected and hosted the black Atlanta-suburban population which has burgeoned in growth within the past three decades. These churches host the membership of the new African American suburban middle class, as well as the black suburban political and business elites. Especially within South Dekalb County, these churches are impressive power-houses and have significantly served to support the political mobilization and empowerment of what is now a near-controlling African American force in Dekalb County government.

4. Mega-churches - These churches are most interesting phenomena in the Atlanta context. If one places the membership size threshold at 2,500, then the Atlanta region is home to a host of mega-churches. About a dozen remain when one sets the membership threshold at 5,000. Two of these mega-churches have memberships greater than 20,000 each. These churches are enormously complex organizations; have highly impressive physical facilities; are about evenly split between inner-city and suburban locations and are disproportionately independent churches, that is, they tend not to be associated with the traditional and established major black church denominations. These are very much pastor-centered; many are effectively charismatic movements of a sort; and by any standard, these churches control major wealth.

5. Female Pastored Churches - Some of the most prominent churches in Atlanta--in terms of membership size, evidence of extraordinary leadership, and overall great success stories--are pastored by females. There are at least three such churches which

easily rank as mega-churches with memberships ranging from around 3,000-5,000 members. These three are contemporary legends within the greater Atlanta community. Overall, the number of churches in this category are small (we were able to identify less than 20 on one list and most of these females were no longer in senior pastor roles at the time of this study), largely due to the persistent and especially acute discrimination--and in some cases denominational prohibition--against female pastors within Black America.

6. Non-denominational Churches - These churches represent the most rapidly growing category of churches in the atlanta region. Many of these churches are clearly products of a new entrepreneurial spirit within the ranks of young, African American ministers, many of whom minister to younger populations of the "newly-churched." It is within this category of churches that one is most likely to find a new phenomenon of husband-wife teams of co-pastors. While this category of churches overlaps significantly with the Suburban Prominents and Mega-churches, we felt that it would be analytically useful and interesting to isolate these churches as a distinct category.

7. Churches which are parts of White Denominations - Black churches which are parts of traditionally white denominations have historically occupied a unique place within African American society. They have traditionally hosted the African American upper class and a significant portion of the African American middle class. These congregations have traditionally been small in size, sometimes nearly fading away due to diminishing numbers, and their worship services have been

noted for being decidedly more contemplative and less expressive in style than what one traditionally associates with black worship styles. Churches in this category are the African American Catholics, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Seventh-Day Adventists, and United Methodist churches. Overall, the number of churches in this category is small.

8. Uniquely Interesting and Other - This category was established to especially capture the emergent variants of multiculturalism which are found within the black church community in Atlanta. For example, there are several churches of prominence which have white pastors and ministerial staffs, with almost totally black congregants. One such church is a mega-church on the large end of the mega-church size-scale. Also included in this category are those few churches which host almost exclusive memberships of African and Caribbean recent immigrants. Also included in this category are the Sunni Muslim (African American adherents of Orthodox Islam) masjids, and Nation of Islam (black muslims) mosques in the Atlanta region.

This then was the population from which we sought to select a purposive sample. This total population comprised around 175 churches.

The Final Research Design and an Expanded Vision

Inquiring minds do want to know! As a result of our efforts to locate available listings of churches, we finally found what seemed a quite comprehensive listing of African American churches in the City of Atlanta. This list had been prepared by The Carter Project of Emory University. The Carter Project was a major anti-poverty

project of considerable complexity which was started by former President Jimmy Carter in the late 1980's and lasted for about a decade.

The Carter Project list was a social scientist's dream as it identified the census track within which each church was located, the percentage black population, and the percentage of population below the poverty line based on 1990 census data. And the list was available in electronic form.

Utilizing this list, we then hoped to be able to do what we could not determine had ever been done before: to conduct a methodologically sound, random sampling of African American churches in a given city. Clearly, findings based on a random sampling would carry greater validity and generalizability. Additionally, we now had data which would allow us to hone in analytically on those African American churches which were located in areas of social and economic distress.

At this point, we were finally able to develop a research design which was not only quite unique in its potential for optimizing analytical insights, but which would also overcome the major shortcoming of most other studies of this population. In short, we were able to develop a three-pronged research design consisting of a) an analytically distinct purposive sample of churches; b) a random sampling of African American churches in The City of Atlanta?; and c) a purposefully focused sampling of African American churches located in distressed communities. We felt that we were ready to do a great work.

The Questionnaire: Assumptions, and The Search for Explanatory Relationships

The questionnaire designed for this study is found in Appendix A. It is a questionnaire which was designed to provide an explanatory base for the provision of social services delivery and significant charitable outreach activities by African American churches in the Atlanta area. We also designed the survey to elicit data on key dynamics of change observable within the black church community locally and, to some extent nationally such as church growth and expansion, suburbanization, changing theological or ecclesiastical perspectives, and the professionalization of local church staffs, as well as the overall professionalization of the role of senior pastor in terms of salary, employment benefits, and other perquisites of the job.

Specifically, with the general background questions 1-9, we sought to elicit basic background and contextual information. However, many of these questions reflected what we had observed thru lived experience regarding the changing context of black churches in the Atlanta metropolitan area. For example, there is a growing tendency for churches to have more than one location. This is particularly the case with inner city churches which have recently located branches in the suburbs though it is to be found among churches with exclusive inner city locations as well. There is an Antioch Baptist North in one location in Atlanta, and an Antioch Baptist South in a different location. Salem Baptist Church has three locations, two in the city of Atlanta, and one in the suburbs of South Dekalb; the latter location has four rounds of Sunday services. Gospel Tabernacle has a location

in the inner city and a suburban location. These churches with multiple locations generally have a full set of Sunday worship services at each location and share ministerial staffs. Multiple locations are one reflection and dimension of black church growth, though this phenomenon is also reflective of a growing dimension of "brand marketing" on the part of churches and a reflection as well of one aspect of a growing entrepreneurial spirit by pastors.

With the growth in the size of the African American population in the Atlanta metropolitan area over the past four decades has come a parallel geographic expansion and dispersion of that population. As a result, many area churches no longer mainly serve a community which is located within the immediate geographic area surrounding the physical church structure. This is increasingly true, for both inner city and suburban churches. Thus a given church may be located in a spatial/geographical community which is characterized by one set of social problems and may serve a spatially dispersed membership/congregation which is characterized by a significantly different socio-economic profile. The background and contextual questions 1-9 are supported by **'Attachment A' which provides a checklist for problems prevalent within the community which lies within a one-mile radius of a church location.**

With questions 10-27, we focused directly on church involvement in social service ministries and charitable outreach. This section of the questionnaire is buttressed by **'Attachment B,' an inventory of social service ministries.** In developing this inventory we deliberately allowed for a very broad definition of

social services, and we deliberately used the wording of ministries as we felt such wording would resonate well with church leaders and who would be completing the questionnaire. With the questions in this section, we sought to elicit information on just what populations (members or non-members) were most likely to constitute the core clientele of church services. We also sought to determine just how social services were provided (by volunteers or paid staff); the extent to which churches were tied in to formal social service networks of government and charitable agencies; and whether churches were receiving direct funding from governmental agencies and or major charities or foundations for the provision of social services. Of course we wanted to inquire about the general level of awareness about Charitable Choice, perceptions of the appropriateness of such policy initiatives involving churches and government/state, and the overall readiness of churches to participate in such funded activities as manifest in their having established entities with 501(c)(3) IRS status.

The inventory of services included in Attachment B contained seven categories of questions. We delineated specific services (questions 1-4) within the general categories of services supporting needs of children and youth; the poor and needy; and specific services designed to support families in various crises, including substance abuse problems and related crisis support groups. We also delineated a set of services (question 5 of Attachment B) which might be offered in support of organized community groups, and in support of groups and activities supporting community mobilization and advocacy pursuits. These services are also covered by

questions 28-32 of the core questionnaire.

Particularly within the last two decades, African American churches have been targeted in both local and national efforts to disseminate basic information regarding public health issues which have particular and disproportionate impacts within the African American population. Thus many black churches regularly host health fairs for their membership and the surrounding community, and many maintain ongoing ministries and other activities with a public health focus. We sought to capture this dynamic with question 6 on Attachment B.

Similarly, as an observable dimension of defining visions of community support and development, many churches have developed ministries around a general theme of economic development. This focus has included both directed ministry activities and church-owned dedicated commercial ventures. This set of services are delineated in Question 7. Finally, in Question 8 of Attachment B, we delineate a range of political activism activities, but with a difference. In addition to some traditional issues which one would expect African American churches to be interested and involved in, we also included what may be characterized as some new issues for black churches. We wanted to both engage in some slight consciousness raising as well as to attempt to capture what might indeed be emergent issue foci for some churches. In this regard, we included issues on which most black churches maintain a stony silence and / or general disregard such as women's issues, environmental action, peace activism, and gay and lesbian issues.

Ministerial convictions

To say that African American churches are particularly pastor-centered organizations is one way of attempting to convey the fact that in the African American church, almost nothing--no matter how minor or insignificant a decision might be involved--happens without the pastor's explicit approval. Actually, in the main, almost nothing of any significance happens except that it emanates from the pastor's initiative. Of course these statements might carry some degree of overstatement, but they nonetheless convey what is an essential truth about these organizations. In such organizations which are so fully dominated by the authority of a single individual, any attempts to understand and explain the activities of such organizations must of necessity focus on understanding the things which motivates the leader. Clearly, the role of pastor is a multidimensional role, likely to be driven by multiple motivators. Yet, one would expect that a major factor which helps to determine the kind of service and outreach activities which a pastor approves and initiates for his or her church would be the pastor's personal ecclesiastical beliefs. We sought to capture some aspects of this factor under the heading of "Ministerial Convictions" with questions 33-40.

Also with questions 33-40, we sought to capture dynamics of some new trends which are readily observable within the black church community such as a strong emphasis on what is termed "prosperity gospel." A growing number of individual ministries are defined by prosperity gospel preaching as a kind of brand identity and such preachings appear to be fueling major dimensions of black church growth. Prosperity gospel, the doctrine that God intends his followers to be prosperous and

that to be poor is a curse, is a highly appealing message to a people yearning and struggling to become middle class and indeed wealthy. We should hasten to add that prosperity gospel is not without its critics, and we want to emphasize that one should not conclude that all or most African American ministers adhere to this doctrine. Yet it is a doctrine which is widely espoused (and not just among African American ministers) and the saliency and popularity of this doctrine is a relatively recent development within the black church community. We have also observed thru lived experience what appears to be a growing emphasis on church-sponsored economic development efforts as a kind of post-civil rights era, and emergent post-voter mobilization emphasis for black churches in terms of defining their roles in the community.

Church Characteristics

The major focus of this section of questions (41-56) was to obtain insights into the overall organizational complexity of churches in the study as a means of gauging and assessing organizational capacity. Besides the assumption that significant numbers of churches are indeed desirous of participating in social service delivery activities, the major implication of Charitable Choice and other faith based policy initiatives is that churches actually possess the organizational capacity to effectively take on the role of a social services bureaucracy. This is an interesting assumption and one which we wanted to explicitly address. **'Attachment C,'** which is a church personnel profile, is designed to buttress some of the questions in this section. Also in this section of questions we sought to capture some key dynamics

and trends which might directly impact on organizational capacity such as whether or not churches were in a moderate to strong growth mode or were experiencing declining membership; whether memberships were decidedly working-to-middle class in socio-economic status; the complexity of the churches' physical plants and properties; and the extent to which churches were adopting and utilizing new media technologies.

In this section we also wanted to capture some emergent dynamics of social change which are particularly evident in the suburbs of South Dekalb County. One, there has been a major shift in the make-up of the population of the southern portion of the county from white to black. This racial shift has significantly impacted the church community. A host of predominantly white churches have seen their congregations dwindle and later essentially evaporate as whites moved out of neighborhoods, in many instances, leaving behind pastors and church sanctuaries and campuses. This trend of racial displacement actually began in the late 1960's, and reached its peak in the early-to-late 1990's. As a result of this racial shift in population, many choice church properties have become available to African American buyers at below-market prices. The result is that many African American congregations have not only been able to follow the movement of the black population to the suburbs, but have been able to leap-frog into (formerly white owned) church properties of significantly greater dollar value and substantially enhanced amenities relative to their old properties. This development has also enabled some entrepreneurial pastors of inner city churches to more readily expand

and open branches in the suburbs. This has been an interesting phenomenon to observe as a social scientist (and to actually participate in as a church member!).

Another dimension of social change which we sought to capture in this section is the increasing multiculturalism of the suburban South Dekalb area. Dekalb County is officially the most hetereogeneous county in the state of Georgia, and a disproportionate share of that hetereogeneity is to be found in South Dekalb. Indeed, within the Atlanta metropolitan area, the very designation of "South Dekalb" connotes a heavily black and ethnically mixed area. In addition to African Americans, the area hosts heavy concentrations of the full range of Asians, Hispanics, blacks from the Caribbean, recent African immigrants, and others. While many of these population groups have established their own religious assemblages, there are a few instances in which some of this multiculturalism has become manifest in the memberships of traditional African American churches. There are other nascent indicators of social change within the church community of the African American community. For example, a newly constructed worship facility of the Church of Latter Day Saints or Mormons has opened in an area of South Dekalb which has an overwhelmingly black population. These developments are yet mere flickers of very interesting social change, yet one can reasonably expect that these trends will increase over time. After all, these type developments were totally unheard of a mere half-decade ago.

Treatment of Pastors

An area such as metropolitan Atlanta is characterized by major wealth in

comparison to rural parts of the state and in comparison to many other parts of the country as well. Thus, just as for other professions, Atlanta is a highly sought after location for ministers. In almost all instances, being pastor of a reasonably sized church in the Atlanta area is assurance of a comfortable lifestyle. In a great many instances, it is assurance of a lifestyle of great comfort with many perquisites and trappings, and great prestige. Moreover, one observes a growing professionalization of the job of pastor generally within the African American church community in terms of full salaried positions with formal benefits packages and permanent church staff only recently associated with such positions. Question 57 of the questionnaire was designed to gauge this growing professionalization of the job of pastor of black churches and the growing prestige of urban pulpits.

Executing The Research Design

We began this research with some misgivings about the feasibility of conducting the research by use of mailed surveys alone, and with some warnings from different colleagues about expecting a high level of non-responses. We were very excited about the research and optimistically reasoned that in Atlanta, things would be different, that Atlanta pastors would respond to this kind of research. We prepared the survey instrument in a printed brochure package which was easy to read and generally user friendly. We carefully checked, usually via friendly telephone calls, the full names of senior pastors before we mailed out surveys. We also devised what we felt was a way of getting around a reliance on surveys alone by carefully crafting a cover letter, addressed to the senior pastor by name, which

actually asked for an in-person interview, and which included an invitation for pastors to review the enclosed questionnaire and hand it off to a trusted assistant for completion.

We even anticipated that in most instances it would be church secretaries who would actually open the mail and we included what we felt would be a friendly gesture which might predispose the secretary to be friendly towards our request and to not forget our letter and survey package. We indicated in the letter to the pastor that as a token of our appreciation for their consideration of our request, we wanted to bring along to the interview a gift-basket for the secretarial staff. (Upon actual delivery, these gift baskets included a six-pack of cokes, a tin of butter cookies, and a bag of mints which the researchers purchased at their own expense). We hoped to do as much as possible to ensure that our letter got past the secretary's desk. We also indicated that we would call within a set period of time to schedule an interview. We sent out an initial batch of one dozen to test our strategy. We received zero responses to our initial mailing. Disappointed but undaunted, we sent out a second batch of two dozen and eagerly worked the telephones. This second effort yielded two interviews. And so it went at about that pace for the first six months of the project.

We determined that we would nonetheless survey the entire samples as we had designed them, with the exception of the two small samples of churches located in economically distressed neighborhoods. We set up a file folder for each church so that we could maintain an accurate log of all calls and so that we could coordinate

our calls in an organized fashion. In our initial calls, we sought to establish a key contact person and to determine if the survey package had been received. In instances in which the package had been misplaced or nobody could determine whether it had been actually received, we sent out duplicate packages directed to the attention of specific individuals. We called, and called, and called, and called..... Going through the lists and chatting with someone (again) or leaving voice mails consumed more than full days of every week, and required constant vigils beside the telephones. Adjusting our strategy a second and third time, we resorted to hand delivering some two dozen surveys. In adopting this strategy we reasoned that if we established an in-person contact with a specific individual, somebody at the church would know us and that would facilitate a response. This strategy clearly worked in only a very few cases, actually in no more than two cases. We received many promises which were in some instances so sincerely and passionately given that we began to say that "Jesus would have believed these promises!" At the end of what ultimately became a very painful ordeal for the two researchers, we collected a total of 23 completed surveys (some had some data missing as individuals did not answer all inquiries). We use the word "collected" because many of the completed surveys were obtained within the context of sit-down interviews. In these instances, we actually learned a great deal about churches well beyond the questions contained on the survey instrument, and in some instances, we did not obtain answers to all queries on survey. Nine surveys were returned as undeliverable, mainly due to incorrect addresses; 1 was returned without comment; and 6 surveys were returned

(three with direct telephone calls) from pastors who were not African American.

A listing of churches which provided responses is included in Appendix B. We have deliberately not provided a listing of all churches to whom surveys were sent as we do not seek to embarrass or criticize those pastors who did not participate. Besides, we take the position that "His Grace is fresh each morning" and we hold out hope that another research effort involving this unique group of respondents might yield different and better results.

What we did find during this effort to generate responses was that in many instances, African American churches have impressive telephone trees which list an array of staff and staff functions and which enthusiastically provide information about church services and assertions about the great wonders which transpire at their respective churches. We also found that a significant number of churches, though not a majority, did not have permanent church staff to handle telephone calls and mail. While this study was ongoing, the Barna Research Organization released a report of a study which found that Prostetant churches disproportionately did not have personnel on hand to answer and respond to telephone calls, that protestant churches were the least likely to be responsive to survey research, and that worst of all were African American churches. **Appendix C** contains what we feel are the **top-ten reasons why African-American pastors/churches do not respond to survey research efforts.** It is very important to note here that we do not feel that the very low rate of response to survey research indicates that efforts to conduct social science research about African American churches are bound to be futile. We

do feel that survey research in particular will continue to present significant obstacles and to offer only limited yields. We are, however, much more sanguine about the expected yields from other research strategies such as elite interviewing (from willing participants) for research projects which might particularly benefit from this kind of design and strategy.

III. Findings and Insights from Survey Data: Seasonal and Episodic Services

The profile of churches participating in the survey is as follows:

- 11 Historic and Prominent Atlanta Churches
- 11 Suburban Prominents
- 2 Activist Churches
- 2 Sunni Muslim/Islamic Congregations (Different and Uniquely Interesting category)
- 1 Female Pastored Church

Denominationally, the participating churches represented are as follows:

- African Methodist Episcopal
- Baptist (several variants)
- Christian, Disciples of Christ
- Congregational
- Islamic/Muslim
- Nondenominational/Interdenominational
- Presbyterian (one African Presbyterian; two parts of predominantly white denominations)
- Seventh Day Adventist

African American churches have long been the most resource rich institutions in the African American community. From the days of rigid segregation when most other avenues of civic association and development were closed to African Americans, churches have served as an integral component of

communal life among blacks. Today, when many other institutions have left inner city communities, churches are often one of the few sources of support that remain in these contexts. Similarly, as parts of the African American community have left the inner city for the suburbs, churches have been among the first institutions to follow, and sometimes precede them to the suburbs. Whether in addressing the unique stresses of inner city life, or the stresses of upward mobility and/or continuing poverty in the suburbs, the African American church persists in being a major source of support for a community of people who remain significantly marginalized in American life. The data confirm that the human and institutional resources that churches have available for such support are considerable. Average Sunday church attendance was 620. More than half of the churches had two Sunday services. Average attendance at the second service was 615. Average attendance at weekday services was almost 500. Nearly 40 percent of the surveyed churches reported experiencing major growth in membership in the last 2 years. This kind of regular interaction with such a large number of people is suggestive of the potential level of influence that churches can have in communities.

Most of the churches surveyed owned a considerable amount of real estate. While there were no questions in the survey that placed a monetary value on the property, the fact that more than 60 percent owned more than just the sanctuary facility is indicative of the fiscal assets held by churches. Almost 20 percent of the churches operated two separate church locations--one in the city and one in the suburbs. About a quarter of the churches operated business enterprises designed to

provide employment and training opportunities for their membership and the local community. The media outreach of the churches was somewhat limited. Only two of the churches were on the radio; three were on television. However, more than two thirds maintained a webpage and two thirds had email addresses as well.

The incorporation of these new communication technologies underscores the greater level of professionalization that has emerged among African American churches in the past few decades. This level of professionalization is also reflected by the fact that nearly 80 percent of churches surveyed had 501(c)(3) status which indicates that these churches either already had, or were poised to establish separate entities dedicated to service and/or entrepreneurial activities. All of them had a full time Pastor who was paid a salary by the church. All of them had at least one other full time paid employee. The employee benefits that the churches offered their Pastors are also a testament to the growing professionalization and bureaucratization of these institutions. Table One records the various kinds of support that were provided annually by the congregation to the Pastor. As the table indicates, a fixed monthly salary, a pension, health benefits, a housing allowance and paid vacations were basic components of the standard benefits package enjoyed by almost every Pastor. Although travel, entertainment and automobile allowances were not as common, about two thirds were also provided these perquisites as well.

Table One
Professional Pastoral Benefits
In Percentages

	Yes	No
Monthly Fixed Salary	91.3	8.7
Pension	87.0	13.0
Health Benefits	91.3	8.7
Housing Allowance	87.0	13.0
Paid Vacation	87.0	13.0
Travel Allowance	73.9	26.1
Entertainment Allowance	69.6	30.4
Automobile Allowance	65.2	34.8

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Source: Social Service Ministries and Charitable Outreach Activities of Activities of African American Congregations in Metropolitan Atlanta, 2000
N=23

African American churches have been important in the black community not just because of their resources, but because of their centrality in the African American experience. Because religion offered valuation in society that too often disregarded their humanity, and because historically churches were one of the few avenues of communal association permitted to them, the spiritual and the secular became uniquely intertwined among blacks. For much of African American history, churches constituted civil society providing opportunities for social, political, artistic, economic, and educational expression in addition to spiritual growth. The data reveal that the majority of the churches continue to maintain a public presence

in local affairs. Only two of the twenty three churches reported that they were rarely involved. Eleven indicated that they were involved as needed and eight described themselves as involved continuously. It is also evident from the data that politicians seeking to communicate with the African American community regard churches as important public venues. Nearly 70 percent recounted that they frequently had political candidates attend their worship services for the express purposes of being seen and of greeting worshipers. More than 40 percent characterized their church as "a must visit" for any serious contender for political office. The high levels of involvement that churches have in public affairs and the political interaction that takes place there, suggest that churches may be uniquely positioned to assess and articulate the needs of a community and to serve as mediating institutions between congregants, communities and government.

The data on ministerial convictions confirm that the Pastors in these churches believe that in addition to "saving souls" it is important for churches and theology to remain relevant to people's everyday lives. Table Two reports ministerial convictions. To be sure, these ministers were still very concerned with imparting the doctrines of the faith. More than ninety percent said that churches need to do a better job teaching the basics. Most did not indicate that they thought churches to be too focused on the afterlife to the detriment of improving the material conditions of people's lives. However, over 80 percent agreed that the role of the black minister in the leadership of the black community is even more critical today than it was during the days of the civil rights movement. More than half

indicated that liberation theology still holds meaning today. Every Pastor agreed that churches could be major forces for economic development in the black community. This finding most likely points to a strong future role for the black church and offers the suggestion of possibilities for new and untried public policy initiatives as well.

Although, adherents to the "prosperity gospel" are reportedly growing, in our survey more than two thirds asserted that there was too much emphasis on the prosperity gospel and about the same percentage rejected a basic theological contention of that gospel-- that it is a curse to be poor. Generally speaking, prosperity gospel is a theological perspective which asserts that prosperity is a divine promise and simply must be claimed. It is preached by some of the most prominent, and prosperous, ministers in the Atlanta area (and across the nation). It is also controversial, and not a few black ministers are quite openly disdainful of this perspective and its adherents, castigating the movement as unbiblical. Perhaps because of its promise and appeal to a community so fully engaged in upward mobility, it is a theological perspective which is likely to continue to capture broad appeal as a means of mobilizing a large congregation.

None of the Pastors could be described as simply otherworldly in nature. A clear indication of this is that more than 80 percent agreed that churches needed to do a better job dealing with human sexuality in its many forms. Considering the centrality of black ministers to the operation, vision and mission of every aspect of African American church life, it is notable that the theological convictions of the ministers surveyed could be supportive of expanded levels of earthly engagement.

Table Two
Ministerial Convictions
In Percentages

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
Need to teach Basics	40.9	54.5	4.5		
Too Much Focus on Afterlife	18.2	18.2	40.9	22.7	
Ministers as Important as in Civil Rights Movement	36.4	45.5	18.2		
Liberation Theology Meaningful	22.7	40.9	27.3		9.1
Church Force for Economic Development	68.2	31.8			
Too Much Prosperity Gospel	27.3	50.0	18.2	4.5	
Curse to Be Poor	4.5	18.2	40.9	36.4	
Better Job With Sexuality	45.5	40.9	9.1	4.5	

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Source: Social Service Ministries and Charitable Outreach Activities of Activities of African American Congregations in Metropolitan Atlanta, 2000
N=23

Ministers also recognize that the level of everyday, earthly needs is great. Table Three reports the social problems that ministers indicated were occurring within a one mile radius of their main church location. The most common problems included substance abuse, teen pregnancy, crime, lack of recreation and unemployment. More than seventy percent of ministries faced each of these menaces to society. It is difficult to summarize the social challenges that the surveyed ministries confront in their neighborhoods because the ministries come from many different environments. Some of the environments are urban, some suburban, some poor, some middle and working class, some decaying, some thriving. However, no one reported that their community had fewer than ten of

these problems. This speaks to the perceived level of need faced by the communities in which many if not most of these churches are located. It also suggests the myriad ministries and charitable outreach efforts in which churches might engage in order to help strengthen their communities. It is particularly interesting that very few reported that their communities encountered problems with racial tension. Only 15 percent of churches indicated that this was a significant issue for them. This may be a function of improved racial relations; it may simply be a reflection of the level of continuing societal segregation. However, it is interesting because often black churches are regarded as highly engaged around issues of racial justice. The fact that few reported racial tension as a social issue presenting particular challenges in their immediate area suggests the magnitude of the other issues faced by these communities.

Table Three

Social Problems in Church Community

In Percentages	Yes	No
Substance Abuse	90.5	9.5
Teen Pregnancy	85.7	14.3
Crime	81.0	19.0
Lack of Recreation	81.8	18.2
Unemployment	72.7	27.3
Poverty	42.9	57.1
Education	59.1	40.9
Illiteracy	47.6	52.4
AIDS/HIV	68.2	31.8
Drug Trafficking	66.7	33.3
Homelessness	47.6	52.4
Limited Transportation	50.0	50.0
Prostitution	42.9	57.1
Affordable Housing	38.1	61.9
Affordable Childcare	57.1	42.9
Healthcare	42.9	57.1
Gang Violence	14.3	85.7
Youth Incarceration	47.6	52.4
Traffic Problems	50.0	50.0
Family Violence	40.0	60.0
Loss of Local Industries and Jobs	57.1	42.9
Racial Tensions	15.0	85.0
Regentrification	29.4	70.6

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Source: Social Service Ministries and Charitable Outreach Activities of Activities of African American Congregations in Metropolitan Atlanta, 2000
N=23

Given the resources that black churches have and the needs that their communities confront, what are churches doing in the area of social service delivery? Table Four reports this information by providing a comprehensive inventory of the kinds of social services that may be offered by churches. These services include ministries to children and youth, ministries to the poor and needy, counseling ministries, health oriented ministries, community oriented ministries, issue oriented ministries, support groups ministries and civic organizations meeting at the church. An index percentage is calculated for each ministry area by dividing the total number of ministries that a church offers in an area by the total list of ministries that churches could offer. The average index percentage is the mean of the calculation for all of the churches surveyed.

The average index percentages indicate that churches had the most extensive involvement in counseling ministries (.43), ministries to children and youth (.40) and ministries to the poor and the needy (.34). They were less engaged around health oriented ministries (.24), community oriented ministries (.24), and issue oriented ministries (.25). They only permitted about a quarter of the civic organizations listed to meet at the church and allowed even fewer outside support groups to use their facilities (.10). These data demonstrate that churches are most involved in the types of social service activities most traditionally associated with their charitable outreaches functions. In more contemporary areas of civic engagement, in health oriented ministry or in ministries such as consumer counseling or adult literacy, the record of churches is not as strong.

Table Four
Social Service Ministries Offered by Churches
In Percentages

		YES	No
Counseling Ministries			
Domestic Violence Counseling		27.3	72.7
Teen Pregnancy Counseling		31.8	68.2
Child Abuse Prevention		22.7	77.3
Suicide Prevention		18.2	81.8
Bereavement Counseling		59.1	40.9
Pre-marital Counseling		81.8	18.2
Ministry to recently divorced		40.9	50.1
Parenting skills classes		50.0	50.0
Singles Ministry		54.5	45.5
Average Index Percentage of Counseling Ministries	.43		
Ministries to Children and Youth			
Day care		31.8	68.2
Headstart		00.0	100.0
Afterschool Programs		31.8	68.2
Tutoring Programs		54.5	45.5
Recreational Programs		54.5	45.5
Summer Daycamp		40.9	59.1
Church Scouting		63.6	36.4
Mentorship Program		30.4	65.2
Leadership Training		54.5	45.5
Average Index Percentage of Ministries to Children and Youth .40			

Table Four (continued)
Social Services Offered by Churches
In Percentages

Ministries to Poor and Needy	YES	NO
Job Search	36.4	63.6
Vocational Training	18.2	81.8
Food Pantries	72.7	27.3
Soup Kitchens	13.6	18.4
Clothing Closets	68.2	31.8
Shelters for Men, Women, Children	18.2	81.8
Habitat for Humanity	13.6	86.4
Meals on Wheels	4.3	95.5
Financial Assistance to the Elderly	72.7	27.3
Transportation for Elderly	31.8	68.2
Recreation for Elderly	9.1	90.9
Prison Ministry	50.0	50.0
Housing Program	27.3	72.7
Average Index Percentage of Ministries to Poor and Needy	.34	
Health Oriented Ministries	**YES**	**NO**
Parish/Regional Health Program	18.2	81.8
Hospice	00.0	100.0
Sick and Shut in Care	68.2	31.8
Ministry to Handicapped	4.5	95.5
Health Screenings	54.5	45.5
Health Education	36.4	63.6
Immunization	4.5	95.5

Table Four (continued)
Social Services Offered by Churches
In Percentages

Health Oriented Ministries	YES	NO
Dental Clinics		100.0
Medical Clinics	4.5	95.5
Exercise Classes	36.4	63.6
Dieting Classes	18.7	81.8
Nutrition Program	31.8	68.2
Blood Drives	72.7	27.3
Organ Donation Awareness	9.1	90.9
Hospital Visitation	50.0	50.0
Average Index of Health Oriented Ministries .24		
Community Oriented Ministries		
Consumer Counseling	27.3	72.7
Community Credit Union	18.2	81.8
Legal assistance programs	13.6	86.4
Co-ops (food, babysitting, health)	13.6	86.4
Neighborhood Cleanups/Civic Beautification	59.1	40.9
Environmental Programs	13.6	86.4
GED (Highschool equivalence programs)	4.5	95.5
Adult Literacy Programs	9.1	90.9
Scholarships for students in need	63.6	36.4
Computer Training Classes	50.0	50.0
Commercial Venture by Church (Retail Businesses etc.)	9.1	90.9
Congregational (or support of) crime watch	100.0	
Disaster Relief	31.8	68.2

Table Four (continued)
Social Services Offered by Churches
In Percentages

Community Oriented Ministries		YES	
Assistance to Immigrants		4.5	95.5
Entrepreneurial Training/Small Business Development		18.2	81.8
Community Bazaars and Fairs		50.0	50.0
Average Index of Community Oriented Ministries	.24		
Issue Oriented Ministries			
Voter Registration		72.7	27.3
Gun Violence Prevention			100.0
Civil Rights and Social Justice		45.5	54.5
Racism and Affirmative Action		31.8	68.2
Affordable Health care		18.2	81.8
Pro-life Advocacy			100.0
Women's Issues		54.5	45.5
Family Values		40.9	59.1
Poverty/welfare rights advocacy		9.1	90.9
Environmental Action		9.1	90.9
Peace Activism		4.5	95.5
Gay and Lesbian Issues		4.5	95.5
Neighborhood Drug Problems		22.7	77.3
Crime	27.3		72.7
Police Brutality		4.5	95.5
Public Schools Improvement		54.5	45.5
Average Index of Issue Oriented Ministries	.25		

Table Four (continued)
Social Services Offered by Churches
In Percentages

Support Group Ministries Meeting at Church	YES	NO
Mothers Against Drunk Driving		100.0
Alcoholics Anonymous	31.8	68.2
Narcotics Anonymous	27.3	72.7
HIV/AIDS	18.2	81.8
ALANON	4.5	95.5
Alateen		100.0
Overeaters Anonymous	4.5	95.5
Loss of child-support group	9.1	90.9
Loss of spouse-support group		100.0
Other health related support groups (cancer, alzheimer etc.)	4.5	95.5
Average Index of Support Group Ministries .10		
Civic Organizations Meeting at Church		
Neighborhood Associations	72.7	27.3
Protest Organizations	9.1	90.9
NAACP	63.6	36.4
National Urban League	9.1	90.9
Other Civil Rights Groups		100.0
Fraternities and Sororities	31.8	68.2
Interfaith collaborations	40.9	59.1
Interracial collaborations	22.7	77.3
Police/community relations meetings	50.0	50.0
Local fraternal groups (Elks, Masons, Eastern Star)	18.2	81.8
Other civic organizations	9.1	90.9
Average Index of Civic Organizations .27		

Source: Social Service Ministries and Charitable Outreach Activities of Activities of African American

Within particular ministry areas this pattern also holds. Churches were most actively involved in what might be regarded as traditional ministry. For example, part of the normal mission of a church is to provide strength and guidance to those facing familial problems. Thus, churches might be expected to provide extensive counseling ministry. This is confirmed by the data. However, when one examines the types of counseling ministries that churches offered most often, it is clear that counseling around weddings and funerals was most common. More than three quarter offered pre-marital counseling. Nearly two thirds offered bereavement counseling. Less common was involvement in familial issue areas of contemporary salience including domestic violence, teen pregnancy, and the prevention of child abuse and suicide. This is particularly interesting when one considers that over 85 percent of churches identified teen pregnancy as a significant problem in the communities around which the church was located. We cannot imagine that there does not exist a significant need for domestic violence counseling within the African American community. Domestic violence is one of those issues which the African American church in particular continues to experience difficulty in engaging fully and effectively.

The types of ministry offered most often to the poor and needy can also be characterized as conventional. Table Four records that a majority of churches had food pantries of some sort, clothes closets, prison ministries and provided financial assistance to the elderly. Many fewer had ministries involved in job searches (36.4 percent) or vocational training (18.2 percent). Although, unemployment was

identified by nearly three quarters of churches as an important challenge for the surrounding community.

Table Four reports churches offer extensive programs for children and youth. Indeed, when the Headstart program is excluded from the average index percentage, churches provide more ministries to children and youth than in any other area. This is expected because of the important socialization function that religion is expected to provide. In the more contemporary area of health oriented ministry, the record of churches is mixed. African American churches have been targeted to disseminate information about public health over the last twenty years. The data indicate that there has been some success in expanding the churches' mission beyond traditional activities in this area. As expected, nearly 70 percent have sick and shut-in care though it is not clear just how care for the shut-in is being defined. This could be the traditional visitations and other ad hoc neighborly support activities traditionally provided by church members to their fellow believers. Half have hospital visitation programs, traditionally considered an expected and obligatory activity. Interestingly, a majority document that they hold health screenings and almost three quarters participate in periodic blood drives. About a third report having health education and nutrition programs as well as exercise classes. None of the activities beyond hospital visitation and sick and shut-in care would be considered a typical church activity and thus these findings suggest that national and local efforts to enlist African American churches in public health functions is slowly succeeding.

It is also notable that in the area on the survey of support group ministries, 18.2 percent of churches claimed to offer ministry to those with HIV or AIDS. While 18.2 percent is certainly not an overwhelming number, particularly in relationship to the scope of this problem in the black community, this finding does signals that black churches might be increasingly willing to encourage the wellness of all their congregants even in areas of sexuality which have traditionally been difficult for churches to navigate. Thus, the data indicate that some inroads are being made in increasing an appreciation for both health and nutrition in churches. However, in this study, churches did not support organ donation awareness, medical clinics, dental clinics, or immunization programs, also area of critical need in the African American community.

As for church participation in community oriented ministry, many offered scholarships to students, many engaged in civic beautification programs or were part of community bazaars and fairs. However, less provided the type of substantive or tangible assistance that many in the community seek. Not even a third of the churches offered consumer counseling. Eighty percent did not offer legal assistance programs, cooperatives, entrepreneurial training or education programs dedicated to improving adult literacy or help for people seeking to obtain GED certification (alternative high school diplomas). Very few operated retail businesses or provided assistance to immigrants, this despite increasingly large numbers of immigrants of African descent in the Atlanta region. None participated in or supported a congregational crime watch, although crime was identified by more than eighty

percent of churches as a significant community problem.

As expected, voter registration was the most common issue oriented ministry offered by churches. Nearly two thirds of them reported holding such drives. Since the civil rights movement, voter mobilization has been one of the basic functions attributed to black churches and thus it is not surprising that voter registration as well as ministries designed to address civil rights, social justice, and racism should be somewhat common among those surveyed. Most churches indicated that they offered ministry around women's issues as well. However, there were no follow-up questions designed to investigate what types of issues these ministries addressed. Because many churches traditionally have offered separate ministry service to men and women as part of their fundamental family orientation, it is unclear that the 54 percent of churches that reported having ministry around women's issues actually examine anything other than the most traditional women's roles and not women's issues as they are popularly understood today. The same may be said for the forty percent of churches that reported they offered ministry around family values.

About twenty percent of churches did have groups that were organized around concerns about crime and drug issues in their neighborhoods. Many fewer engaged around issues of poverty, the environment, peace, gay and lesbian life, and police brutality. Public school improvement was the one non-traditional issue that churches seemed to be organizing around. More than 50 percent of churches indicated that they had organizations in their churches dedicated to confronting that issue. This is a very interesting finding, the full meaning of which is unclear and

points to the need for further research.

Much of the theoretical literature on the importance of churches in communities suggests that church facilities are major resources in organization and mobilization because they can be used as significant meeting spaces. The data confirm that in some instances churches are allowing their facilities to be utilized in this manner. Nearly two thirds permit neighborhood associations to meet in the church. Almost that many (63.6 percent) allow the NAACP to utilize this forum. Half of the surveyed churches permit police/community relations meetings in their churches and forty percent use the buildings for interfaith collaborations. However, churches did not often allow established external support group ministries to utilize church buildings for meetings. The average ministry index indicates that most churches had only one support group type ministry. This is important because it may be suggestive of how willing churches are to engage in social service partnerships with more secularly oriented organizations. Very few of the churches in our survey either received or made referrals to social service agencies. This suggests a disturbing fact, that African American churches are generally not a part of local social service networks. The data point to only two emerging exceptions to this conclusion. About a third of churches held Alcoholics Anonymous meetings and a third held Narcotics Anonymous meetings. Ninety percent of the churches surveyed indicated that substance abuse was a major problem in their area. This finding may be reflective of that reality.

In addition to documenting the extent of involvement of black churches in

social service delivery, this study sought to establish the composition of the clientele for these services. Much of the research on churches over the past thirty years has chronicled the decline of the neighborhood church. Since the end of codified racism in the 1960s, blacks have experienced expanded social and economic opportunities. These expanded opportunities have led to the suburbanization of many in the frican American community. While suburbanization has allowed some to "live the American dream," it has left many inner city churches populated by those who commute to church, both from the suburbs and from disparate parts of inner city communities. Other churches have moved to the suburbs in search of the people who now live in bedroom communities, newly alienated from the strangers who are now their neighbors.

The emergence of mega-churches which are fed by huge and far flung congregations has further complicated this dynamic by creating virtual communities in which few members live in the area of the church or have a material interest in the neighborhood in which the church building is physically located. It is not unusual for some suburban branches of inner-city churches to not have any staff presence on weekdays at suburban sites. At least one suburban branch of a major inner-city church was observed to constantly maintain locked gates to the parking lot of its suburban facility during the week, although posted signs indicate three worship services on Sunday. These developments threaten to fundamentally alter historic conceptions of community and the role of the church in the community. These developments also raise many compelling questions. Is the

church community those who attend the church or those who live where the church is located? How much social service ministry responsibility does the church have to each constituency, its members or the immediate surrounding community, especially when these constituencies are not synonymous or congruent?

The data reveal that these questions are salient for many churches in the study. Only 22 percent indicated that they mainly served the community immediately surrounding the church. More than three quarters claimed to have memberships which were more spread out. The data disclose that on average churches strike a balance by expending roughly equal resources on both constituencies, members and community residents. Fifty two percent of social service ministries were provided to nonmembers and 56 percent of offerings from the benevolent fund were given to nonmembers. These percentages did not vary significantly depending on whether the membership was local or more geographically dispersed. We might conclude from these data that these churches are making significant inroads in reaching the unchurched though it is not clear that these connections are lasting ones.

This research project also sought to characterize the staffing of the social service delivery activities offered by churches. It is important to examine staffing because interviews revealed that in many churches there was not a clear differentiation between what they called "ministry"--often ad hoc and episodic-- and what we regarded as the more bureaucratic and professional nature of true social service engagement. Table Five details that in terms of logistics and manpower only

a third of the churches in the survey had paid staff that supported social services ministries and outreach activities. Forty three and a half percent had church clubs and organizations to do this work. More than 90 percent of the churches relied on individual volunteers. While high levels of volunteering might be expected from those seeking to show Christian charity, the relatively low numbers of churches with staff dedicated to these pursuits suggest some challenges for those who would rely on churches for a routinized schedule of social services.

Table Five
Support For Social Service Delivery

Percent of churches who report social service delivery provided by:

Volunteers	91.3%
Clubs and Organizations within the church	43.5%
Paid Staff	30.4%

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Source: Social Service Ministries and Charitable Outreach Activities of Activities of African American Congregations in Metropolitan Atlanta, 2000

N=23

Churches did not have much outside support for the social services they provided. As Table Six shows, a mere 15 percent indicated that they had any form of corporate support and only 5 percent of churches had local government support; 5 percent had state government support; and 5 percent had federal funds to supplement their social service budgets. Even more notable were the results

concerning the funding of social services under the Charitable Choice provision of the 1996 Welfare Reform Act. Table Seven reports that only about 5 percent of churches had any programs funded under this policy provision. Even more remarkably, although this survey was conducted in the year 2000, 87 percent of church pastors had never even heard of Charitable Choice. For the last 5 years Charitable Choice has been a high profile, highly controversial initiative. The fact that the vast majority of pastors were not familiar with it suggest that they may be very disconnected from the arena of public policy even around issues that could directly impact them. These researchers provided several churches with an information packet on Charitable Choice.

However, churches certainly have interest in receiving funds to help with services. Table Seven also details that about 80 percent of churches reported that it was a good idea for the social services of a church to be supported by government funding. Seventy five percent said that they would be very interested in such a provision if solid funding was made available. The response of the remaining 25 percent was also intriguing. This quarter questioned if the benefits received under Charitable Choice would be worth the hassles of working with the government. Their response highlights a potential problem with churches receiving government aid for social services. Churches may be either unwilling or under-prepared for the kinds of reporting and assessment requirements that would likely be required as a condition of receiving public funds.

Table Six
Support for Social Services and Outreaches
In Percentages

	Yes	No
Corporate Support	15.0	85.0
City/County Governmental Support	5.3	94.7
State Governmental Support	5.3	94.7
Federal Governmental Support	5.0	95.0

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Source: Social Service Ministries and Charitable Outreach Activities of Activities of African American Congregations in Metropolitan Atlanta, 2000
N=23

Table 7
African American Churches and Charitable Choice
Percentages

	Yes	No
Churches that Reported Hearing of the Charitable Choice Program	13.0	87.0
Churches Reported Having A Program Funded Under Program	5.9	94.1
Good Idea Church Social Services be Supported by Gov't Funding	81.0	19.0
Feelings About Charitable Choice		
Very Interested if Solid Funding is Available	75.0	
Question Benefits worth Hassle of Working With Government	25.0	

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Source: Social Service Ministries and Charitable Outreach Activities of Activities of African American Congregations in Metropolitan Atlanta, 2000
N=23

Summing Up: Findings and Insights from Survey Data

There are several important conclusions about African American churches and social service delivery that are suggested by these data. First, there is no doubt that African American churches continue to be major resources in the African American community. They are rich in both human and institutional capital. These resources combined with what has been described as the "faith factor," (however it gets defined), in social services represent the considerable potential churches have to positively impact communities. It is this potential many seek to realize by making churches integral components of social welfare and reform initiatives. Second, in the black community there are few theological constraints on involvement in public affairs. The fact that the vast majority of respondents reported that the role of the black minister in the leadership of the black community is even more critical today than it was during the days of the civil rights movement is indicative of the much larger mission that African American churches have than ministering to the spiritual lives of parishioners.

Third, African American churches do engage in a wide variety of social services. However, they were most involved in the types of services traditionally associated with their charitable outreach functions; did not often partner with secularly oriented external organizations; and are not linked to local social service networks. The data also reveal several important challenges to African American churches in taking on a larger role in the delivery of social services. First, changing conceptions of what constitutes the church community has led churches to begin to

re-evaluate the question of who comprises their primary constituency and what constitutes their primary responsibility to this constituency. Although, churches have in the past been pillars of the community in which the building was physically located, as more and more of their parishioners commute to church will they continue to perform this role? Second, the largely volunteer staff of church social services makes it more difficult to routinize the delivery of services beyond the relatively episodic and somewhat ad hoc nature of African American church "ministries".

Finally, churches are not accustomed to receiving funding from outside sources. In the year 2000 the majority were not even acquainted with Charitable Choice. The major focus of the Charitable Choice debate has been whether or not it would be constitutional to provide funds to churches as part of a "Faith-Based policy initiative. These data suggest that independent of the debate about whether such a policy initiative is constitutional or not, considerable discourse must be devoted to questions about the capacity of churches to participate in what are effectively policy implementation partnerships with the government in this way. The fact that the majority of churches surveyed here were not even aware of Charitable Choice and even fewer were effective partners in existent social service networks underscore the amount of work that must be done to bring churches into such partnerships.

IV. Findings and Insights from Investigations of Dedicated Service Delivery Efforts

The services reported above from the survey data are a mix of dedicated service efforts and more episodically and seasonally provided services. The latter category predominates by far. When we refer to services as being seasonally provided, we refer to the fact that these services are mainly provided on an episodic basis. Though a church may continually engage in provision of a particular set of services from one season to another, rarely are these services provided on what one could reasonably characterize as a consistent basis. That is, rarely will one find that these services are available at pre-set hours of the day, week after week, month after month. Rather they are more likely to be provided on an erratic basis, with information provided on an ad hoc basis, for brief periods of time, and then mainly as part of a special initiative of a particular church organization. As such initiatives invariably wane, these services will lapse, until the initiative is revitalized, perhaps by another church organization, or by the initiative of another lay leader. This is particularly the case with services which do not lie within the core set of ministerial services which are routinely and rather consistently provided to members such as pastoral, marital, and grief counseling which are considered a part of the pastor's core set of obligations. By far, the host of services which might be provided by churches over an 18 month period are episodically provided, waxing and waning with the interests and energies of those individuals and groups who spearhead such efforts. However, in a few instances, churches will engage in sustained service efforts, attempting to provide services on something approaching a permanent basis

and within a formally structured organizational context dedicated specifically to service delivery.

One of the objectives of this research was to identify instances in which churches engaged in dedicated service delivery efforts. By dedicated service efforts we refer to specifically focused service delivery programs, operated on a sustained basis over time, and operating with a set staff within an identifiable and definable bureaucratic structure. Implicit within policy initiatives such as Charitable Choice are the assumptions that churches will be willing and able to assume a character and functional capability resembling those associated with permanent bureaucracies. Indeed, if churches are to become effective service providers they will have to meet some minimum requirements of consistency, predictability and reliability, and professionalization.

We were able to identify only two instances of clearly dedicated service delivery programs operated by local African American congregations in the Atlanta area which to varying degrees fit the definition above. These two programs comprise an interesting set of contrasts, particularly in terms of foci. The contrasts reflect a broad definition of services and ministry. What we also see from these two profiles are the different ways in which churches and pastors establish visions and missions for their churches, and what they define as critical and strategic community building activities.

A. Greenforest Social Services[1]

Greenforest Social Services is an arm of Greenforest Community Baptist

Church located in Decatur, Georgia, a part of South Dekalb County, a suburb of East Atlanta. Greenforest Community Baptist Church is what we might call a mid-size mega-church with a membership of 5,500. The Pastor describes the church as "actually non-denominational which just happens to be Baptist." The church is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, but this is more an historical tie than one which defines the contemporary dogma and operation of the church. Greenforest was once a predominantly white church with ties to the Southern Baptist Convention, but was one of the first major congregations in South Dekalb to be affected by the population transition from white to black in the mid-1960's. The last whites transferred their membership from Greenforest in 1977. With the shift to an African American membership base fully completed, Greenforest was relocated (purchasing a facility which was previously owned by a white congregation) and grew from a very small black membership base of 25 members to its present prominence. The Pastor, Rev. George McCalep arrived in 1979, and is a very highly regarded minister both locally and nationally. He holds an earned doctorate, has published a half dozen books, holds a lectureship at Hampton University in Virginia, and regularly hosts major training programs for other ministers and church leaders. The Church campus occupies a total of 105 acres of land, and the Church owns houses and apartments which it places in residential use. Greenforest has operated a fully accredited Christian Academy for grades 1-12 for over 10 years, with year 2,000 enrollment of over 600 students. The Church also has established a credit union, and operates a Community Development Corporation.

Greenforest Social Services (GSS) is a dedicated service arm of the Church which is operated by a full-time Director, occupies a separate physical facility on the church campus (a well appointed 2-story house with a basement which has been transformed into an office), and which has a separate operating budget which is determined thru a formal process. Philosophically, and spiritually, the Social Services Ministry is situated within the broader principles and mission of Greenforest Church. The omnibus vision statement of the Church is: "to build a biblical community of loving relationships whose members daily and devoutly love, follow, and model Christ." The omnibus vision is in turn buttressed by a set of 23 core values around which the Church is organized. Printed copies of the Church's mission statement and statements of core values are ubiquitous on the church premises. In this regard, Greenforest is somewhat unusual among churches in its efforts to hold its specific vision so constantly in the forefront.

The Greenforest Social Services unit is anchored by a specific mission statement which is derived from the omnibus vision statement of the Church. The mission statement was provided to the researchers as a matter of course, in a printed statement at the start of our interviews. The Director clearly saw the mission statement as integral to our understanding the mission and efforts of GSS.

The **Mission Statement** of Greenforest Social Services is as follows:

> "To demonstrate God's love by providing one-on-one crisis intervention that includes food, financial assistance, materials, advice and counseling to the best of our ability, and proper referral to external social agencies those needs that cannot be met by the church."

The Statement of Key Principles of Greenforest Social Services include a commitment to providing the kind of help which individuals can use to improve their own situation; a concern for the worth, dignity, and integrity of the individual; concern for the whole person; a commitment to quality service; and a determination to be aggressive and results oriented (vision statement).

Primary funding for Greenforest Social Services is provided almost exclusively from church sources. The church utilizes a formal process in which it essentially tithes to its collective set of social service activities. That is, a full 10 percent of the church's annual budget of more than $4 million is set aside for functions which it defines as social service activities, more commonly referred to as missions and benevolence (these include an international assistance mission). The entity which is designated as Greenforest Social Services does not receive all of this initial sum but must compete with other activities of the church. Rather, the portion which is allocated to GSS comprises around $134,000 annually. GSS also receives additional funds in contributions from Sunday School classes (which have total weekly average attendance of 1,400) for a total of about $6,000, and another $6,000 from the pastor's unrestricted funds account. Thus the GSS operates on a basic annual budget of approximately $150,000. Some anonymous donations which are dropped in a box at the GSS door in sealed envelopes are generally given unopened to families in crisis. GSS also receives some financial support for its handling of a USDA food program, a Georgia State government funded food program, and a United Way grant which is earmarked for utility assistance. Thus GSS activities are

primarily focused on food assistance and assistance with utilities.

GSS operates a total of seven (7) programs. While some of its programs are government supported, none is done explicitly under Charitable Choice per se. Its major program is a **Food Pantry**. The Food Pantry is church funded and supported. The GSS Food Pantry is an approved outlet, official approved and sanctioned by the Atlanta Food Bank which is the umbrella organization of area food banks. The Atlanta Food Bank is a major non-profit which acts as a central distributor in an area-wide food assistance program which is supported by all grocers in the metropolitan area and by private donor and corporate contributions. Member Food Panty participants must be formally approved and must operate their sites according to specific guidelines. GSS is required to be able to properly store and handle all food items, including those which require refrigeration. GSS in turn purchases food from the Atlanta Food Bank for 14 cents per pound which is primarily a handling fee charged by the Food Bank. The GSS is responsible for transporting its food allotment from the main distribution facility to the GSS site. GSS must provide a monthly report to the Atlanta Food Bank which comprises a breakdown of the clientele receiving food assistance for that month. This is one of several reporting requirements to which GSS must respond.

From its Food Pantry supplies, GSS strives to be able to provide food assistance to families in crisis on a first-come-first-served basis. GSS has developed its own rules which are intended to guard against fraud and abuse of its food assistance. In this regard, GSS attempts to limit its food assistance to once per 6 month intervals,

or twice per year, per family. Additionally, it will provide modest cash assistance to families in crisis once a year. The reasoning behind these rules is a philosophy of self-help and a commitment by GSS to move families toward problem solving.

Consistent with this self-help philosophy and support with problem solving, GSS regularly offers help to families in crisis thru its **Holistic Training Program** which is held on the first and fourth Saturday morning of each month at the GSS site. Holistic Training focuses on helping people to anticipate and develop practical solutions to everyday problems. Thus training focuses on such things as household budgeting, how to access government and charitable resources to assist in problem solving, effective grocery shopping and food preparation, how to do minor car repairs, how to buy a house, practical issues of home ownership, and low-level computer training. Participants in the GSS assistance programs are strongly encouraged to attend these classes but are not required to do so. The Holistic Training Program classes are also used as a means for Greenforest members to minister to the spiritual needs of those attending the classes.

GSS serves as an approved distribution point for a **USDA funded food assistance program.** This program is a means-tested program, that is, recipients must meet specific income guidelines set by the USDA. GSS personnel must verify eligibility of individuals referred for this program. Food for this program is provided by USDA and is kept separate from the GSS Food Pantry items. GSS maintains separate records for the USDA program. Similarly, GSS operates a small state funded food assistance program, "State Nutritional Assistance Program"

(SNAP) which is designed to aid families with children to ensure that children receive a balanced diet. This too, is a means-tested program and GSS personnel must provide some of the screening for this program. Rather strict record keeping requirements accompany this program and GSS personnel complain about the excessive paperwork which accompanies government programs. This is a particularly burdensome challenge for a church-based program which must invariably rely on volunteers for much of its program delivery (personnel issues are discussed below).

GSS operates a program which provides assistance with utility payments in cases of dire need. This program is operated on a grant from United Way. GSS has firm procedures in place for verifying that disconnection of utilities is eminent and provides direct notification to utility companies of the amount of assistance provided by GSS. Again, such procedures guard against abuse and fraud, but add to the administrative burden, read workload, of providing this service. Similarly, GSS operates a small assistance program from a FEMA grant for utility assistance. Beneficiaries must show proof of being at least 60 days in arrears in utility payments. Assistance from this program is provided only once per year per family. Record of assistance are maintained, including copies of overdue utility bills. Any additional assistance to families participating in these two programs must come from unrestricted GSS funds.

A totally church funded program operated by GSS is their "Feed The Homeless" program in which lunches are provided to homeless shelters in various

locations in the Atlanta area. The program serves a specific set of five (5) homeless shelters and a pre-determined number of lunches are provided to each shelter for a total of 400-450 lunches each Saturday. Some homeless shelters pick up their lunches from the GSS site, others have their lunches delivered to them. The Feed the Homeless program is considered one of Greenforest's basic mission activities. Again, the GSS Director was able to provide unsolicited copies of detailed records of this program to the researchers. The program works well because it is not dependent on the limited personnel which is assigned specifically to GSS. Rather, this program is supported by the deacons of the church, with each participating deacon acting as a team leader who is in turn supported by a host of members who support this program. Deacons are assigned to support this program on a rotating basis for two Saturdays per month with a roster of assignments kept in the main church office. As in most churches, the title of deacon denotes a position of leadership and authority, and deacons are generally assigned specific ministries. Hence, for a church operated program, the support of the deacons provides and assures a critical base of support, logistical and otherwise.

In keeping with their basic commitment to missions and outreach, GSS and other church officials are very proud of the fact that they delivered a "16 wheeler" (tractor trailer) loaded with food and emergency supplies to Camilla, GA (in southwest Georgia) during the flooding which came in the aftermath of Hurricane Hugo.

Who Does GSS Serve?

GSS officials report that fully 95 percent of assistance provided is in the form of community outreach, that is, the assistance is provided to individuals and families who are not members of Greenforest Community Baptist Church. This is not to say that Greenforest does not have any members who are needy. The Church maintains a process whereby church members first seek assistance through the deacons to which they are assigned. The deacons in turn are equipped to develop a directed course of action for dealing with the needs of needy members which might entail some involvement of GSS, but does not end there. At the time of these interviews, GSS provided food assistance to an average of 24 individuals/families per week. (Food assistance is generally restricted to twice yearly per family). Another 30 individuals/families were provided with cash assistance. (Direct cash assistance is generally restricted to once per year per family). The GSS budget is divided almost evenly between expenditures for food assistance and cash assistance. GSS averages $1,500 per week in cash assistance. These numbers suggest a significant level of assistance being provided, though they clearly also reflect a relative scarcity of resources available for this kind of support. Although the researchers do not have any hard data to support our beliefs, we do believe that the level of resources expended by Greenforest is among the highest of any (African American) church in the Atlanta metropolitan area.

GSS is by any standards an impressive operation and particularly so for a nonprofit organization which is not run by a large cast of paid employees. GSS is supported by a modest cadre of personnel, who are effectively volunteers. Only the

Director of GSS is a full time employee. He is a retired federal government bureaucrat, thus is able to donate his time to GSS as his ministry to the church and to the community. Two part-time employees work on the front desk, mainly engaged in screening applicants for various assistance programs. These two employees each work 8 hours per week. A third employee works 16 hours per week and is mainly responsible for preparing reports, ordering food, and helping out wherever needed. Two additional employees work in the food pantry, 4 hours each for 2 days a week. The GSS is open to receive clients from 10 am to 2 pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, and from 1-6 pm on Wednesday. Employees strive to arrange work by appointments as much as possible, but they report that getting applicants to adhere to scheduled appointments is very difficult. Only two of the employees are paid a nominal fee of $100 per month. Everybody else is a volunteer. Most are retired. The Director of is the one employee who maintains near constant hours at GSS and uses his personal truck to do most of the transporting of food products for GSS. Thus GSS is primarily an operation which is run almost entirely by part-time, volunteer help.

Issues of fraud and abuse are matters of serious concern for GSS officials, as it is for other church officials who are involved with providing direct assistance to individuals in need. More than once, church officials discussed with the researchers their questions about "how much help is enough," and when does assistance become a path of enablement to greater dependency and general reckless and irresponsible lifestyles. They report that they do experience abuse of their programs

and that they are particularly torn when having to deny assistance for families with children who are clearly being adversely affected by family conditions and circumstances. Yet, even relatively affluent churches have limited resources for benevolent activities, and they have major questions about how to have their limited resources make the greatest impact, and/or provide support for those individuals who are experiencing severe crises.

The Nonprofit social services community has developed a mechanism called **Pathways** for dealing with some aspects of the issues of fraud and abuse. Pathways is a network of helping organizations. **Pathways maintains a computerized database to which the helping organizations forward their records of assistance.** Member subscribers to Pathways can go online to determine whether a family or individual has received charitable assistance, at what time, from which organization, and in what forms and amount of assistance. With Pathways, helping organizations can assure that individuals are not just making-the-rounds of all helping organizations. Individuals seeking assistance are informed that their records will be provided to Pathways. Again, church officials are not totally comfortable with this process, but they do feel that it greatly reduces fraud and abuse of their limited assistance resources. GSS is a participant in the Pathways network (and first informed the researchers of the existence of this program, and we were able to pass this information along to other churches).

B. Antioch Urban Ministries, Inc.[2]

Antioch Urban Ministries, Inc. (AUMI) is described as a social action outreach

ministry of Antioch Baptist Church North commonly referred to as Antioch North (in part to differentiate it from its sister church, Antioch Baptist Church South). Antioch North is a mega-church, with a year 2,000 reported membership of 10,000 and growing. Antioch North is located in inner-city Atlanta, with its main sanctuary occupying land wedged in the immediate shadow of Georgia Tech, Coca Cola Headquarters, The Atlanta Chamber of Commerce and the Georgia Dome. Its location is right on the fringe of downtown development, constituting a sort of buffer from the glitz of great affluence and the striking poverty of the English Avenue Community (a very old, poor and drug infested community). Antioch North rises as a sort of phoenix, housed in a newly constructed, (52,000 square feet, $5.7million) worship center and administrative office complex. The church owns an extensive collection of properties in the surrounding area which it uses to support the various components of its social ministries arm and is one of the most active developers in its immediate community.

Antioch North is a very old congregation, founded some 115 years ago, and has for decades served as one of the old line historic Atlanta black churches. The pastor, Rev. Cameron Madison Alexander is "A Morehouse Man," holds two Doctor of Divinity degrees, and has long served as President of the Georgia State Chapter of the National Baptist Convention. The Rev. Alexander is a minister of significant prominence, locally, state-wide, and nationally. For 25 years, Rev. Alexander has served as the president of the General Missionary Baptist Convention of Georgia, Inc. This is a powerful position of significant influence. As an organization

representing 861 churches throughout the state, it is often described as the largest organization of African Americans in the state. Rev Alexander is also widely known for his stance against the ordination of women as ministers. Urban legend has it that he even refuses to allow females into his pulpit for any reason at all, not even to give a secular presentation. We found that this legend is almost always repeated whenever the topic of women in the ministry comes up in local conversation. Yet, there is no doubt that Rev. Alexander is deeply admired by many, many women; that female employees of the church and female members of his congregation exhibit the deepest loyalty to him. The place of women in ministry is an issue which confronts the African American church in unique ways, and unfortunately, analysis of dimensions of that confrontation are beyond the scope of this project.

AUMI was incorporated in 1991 as a non-profit, charitable organization to serve as a means of more formally and strategically focusing the church's social ministries. It is organized primarily around a housing and human services focus with its purpose being to serve as a source of support and advocacy for the poor and disadvantaged. AUMI has adopted as its mission statement the theme: "Serving the least of these." AUMI is involved in an interesting mix of service ministries, most of which are buttressed by support from city and county (Fulton) government agencies and programs. However, none of its programs are operated as an explicit part of the Charitable Choice initiative or any other specific faith-based initiative. Most of its ministries are permanent programs, while a few are more seasonal in nature. Its specific permanent ministries include the following:

1. **Madison House** - Madison House was started when the church purchased the old Walton hotel for ($975,000 against an appraised value of $3.5 million) in 1991. Madison House serves as a 108 unit single-room occupancy facility to provide housing to the working poor. Madison House also hosts a full support program (food, case management and therapy) for 20 homeless individuals who are suffering from non-infectious tuberculosis. Designed to help prevent the spread of TB among the homeless and to reduce the general public health threat of this resurgent disease. Residents participating in the TB program are referred by the Fulton and Dekalb Counties Health Departments. This program is also supported by some state funds in the amount of approximately $250,000 annually.

2. **Matthew's Place** - Matthew's Place was started in 1993 as a 27 room housing facility which provides long-term transitional housing for homeless persons who afflicted with AIDS or who are HIV positive. AUMI provides residents with two meals per day. Case management for residents is provided by AID Atlanta (which links residents to other available services). AUMI also includes these residents in its computer training classes and its GED preparation classes.

3. & 4. **Ruth's Place and Luke's Place** - Ruth's Place and Luke's Place are gender-specific transitional housing facilities for women and men respectively who are recovering from chemical dependencies. Both were started in 1994. Both are run in conjunction with the Salvation Army's Detroxification program, and Ruth's Place has a collaboration with the Atlanta Ladies Union Mission. Ruth's Place and Luke's Place are described as Bible-based , systematic recovery programs and provide

housing, meals and structured support activities. Both are staffed with certified addiction counselors. Participants in these programs also have access to AUMI's clerical and computer training classes (classes are offered 2 nights per week, with access to computers available 4 nights per week).

5. **Land of Promise** - Land of Promise is a residential treatment program for men who are beginning recovery from alcohol and drug abuse. This program is located in rural South Georgia, on a 273 acre retreat facility initially purchased by The Georgia Missionary Baptist Convention in 1987 as a retreat center, and converted to its current use in 1994. Land of Promise complex includes a 70-acre lake, a chapel, two dormitories, three cottages, and an antebellum house, and includes a fully working farm which provides a work program and the food needs for the residents. Residents complete a minimum 45-day Christ-centered, work-focused recovery program. Residency as Land of Promise is considered the first intensive phase of recovery. The program primarily serves residents of the state of Georgia (60 percent), but is open to men from other states as space is available. AUMI officials report that this program has served a total of 5,000 men in its seven years of operation. Many men graduating from this program move on to half-way houses such as Luke's Place. Those moving into Luke's Place work at AUMI headquarters for their first two weeks in residency at Luke's Place as the initial part of their re-entry into the work place.

6. **Billups and Decker House** - Billups and Decker House fits into the overall AUMI recovery programs by serving as what is called a 3/4 House. The 3/4 House is the

third phase of a three-part recovery program which begins with residency at Land of Promise. Participants graduate from the Half-way House programs and move on to an evenless structured setting in which an extended family kind of atmosphere of support is provided.

7. **Project Redirection** - is a collaboration between AUMI and the Clark-Atlanta University (CAU) Criminal Justice Institute. This project is funded by the Fulton County Solicitor's Office and serves as an alternative to prosecution for first-time juvenile offenders. Participants are referred by the Fulton County Juvenile Court and attend counseling which is intentionally provided by individuals which have survived incarceration, drug abuse, and the like. AUMI officials specifically point out that church leadership did not want counselors in this program to be "egg-head" social scientists but real survivors with pertinent real life experiences. AUMI provides the counselors for this program and CAU is reported to provide the recordkeeping and processing of administrative matters. This program has been operational for 17 years on an annual budget of $100,000 which has not been increased since the program's inception despite generally positive reports about its usefulness.

8. **Bethursday Development Corporation, Inc.** - Bethursday is the community-development arm of AUMI and has as its specific mission to facilitate the revitalization efforts of the English Avenue Community. Bethursday provides the full range of assistance to low and moderate income families seeking to purchase, construct, or rehabilitate properties within the English Avenue community.

9. **Multiple Economic Development Projects** - AUMI's activities are impressive and far-flung. At any given point in time, Antioch North and/or AUMI can be found to be engaged in a host of projects in varying stages of development. These projects reflect the energies and vision of the church pastor, and also reflect his impressive range of influence within the Atlanta business and government community. For example, at the time of these interviews, Antioch North was involved in a **partnership with Affordable Housing Partnership of Atlanta** in the renovation of a 132 unit apartment complex (Columbia/Oakland Courts in the Little Five Points area); and **a collaboration with the Atlanta (city) Development Authority, COPA, Inc. (A private, non-profit corporation created by the downtown business community)** to develop the **North Yards Business Park**, a complex of 70 units of housing, a child care center, a recreation center, and a job training center. The North Yards project is touted as a major jobs creation project, expecting to yield 2,000 jobs. At the conclusion of this project in fall of 2001, ground was being broken at North Yards and AUMI was setting up computers to support a Quick-Stop Training Program Program in conjunction with the North Yards project. The Quick-Stop Training Program (QTPP) is designed to provide training for new employees of North Yards businesses. In order to qualify for tax benefits which accrue to businesses locating at North Yards, these businesses must hire employees from the English Avenue Empowerment Zone. AUMI will provide training via the QTPP. This training program is being supported by the Workforce Development Agency of the State Department of Labor.

10. A major Food Assistance Program - Antioch North also operates a major Food Pantry as an auxillary of The Atlanta Food Bank. Food assistance from the Food Pantry is distributed twice weekly and officials report that on the days of food distribution that individuals will be lined up for food assistance before the Food Pantry staff arrives for work. Food distribution begins at 12 noon. At 11 am a devotional service is held during which AUMI ministers seek to provide an inspirational and empowering Christ-focused message to participants. Those seeking food assistance are invited to attend regular services and to become a member of Antioch North. Antioch North does not participate in the Pathways program which tracks participants seeking charitable support though they did acknowledge an awareness of this program.

The Antioch North Food Pantry is supported wholly by church funds. AUMI also serves as a distributor for the USDA Food Assistance Program and the state of Georgia SNAP program. Neither of these programs provide financial support to AUMI. These researchers toured the AUMI Food Pantry facilities and found them to impressionistically meet the spatial and other food handling requirements (refrigeration and clean storage) of a major food assistance operation. In keeping with reporting requirements of the Atlanta Food Bank, AUMI records for August (which they provided to the Researchers) reflect that they provided food assistance to 1,241 families, 2,296 adults, 428 senior citizens, and 1,766 children under the age of 18 (these groups overlap to some extent). These numbers do not reflect food assistance provided thru the USDA and SNAP programs.

11. **Multiple Seasonal Projects and Crisis-based Assistance.** In addition to its permanent outreach and social services ministries, like most churches, Antioch North is involved in a range of more or less seasonal services. Such seasonal services are defined as initiatives which might be 3-6 months in duration and which might lapse for a while, to be possibly resurrected again as demand and interests dictate. For example, A **Clothes Closet** is operated in conjunction with the Food Pantry and clothing is provided to those seeking such assistance. From time to time, the church might make special calls for contributions to the Clothes Closet and there is no apparent effort to maintain any particular level of clothing supplies except for considerations for winter weather clothing needs. Yet this program serves as a unique service to the community. During one interview for this project, the researchers observed individuals arriving with clothing drop-offs for the Clothes Closet. As this report was nearing completion, AUMI was prominently featured in the local newspaper for its launching of an intensive **tutorial program of math and science** instruction for disadvantaged children at multiple grade levels and AUMI officials were proudly making claims of having contributed to up-ticks in achievement test scores of Atlanta Public School students. AUMI officials also reported that they had just purchased a building on North Avenue which they will use to house **a structured program for latchkey kids** in anticipation of such needs by employees of North Yards as well as others in the surrounding community. Again, like most churches, Antioch North provides emergency utility, rent, and mortgage assistance to those seeking such needs through AUMI.

AUMI is a large operation. The Executive Director reports that the total number of employees is over 60 people employed, most full-time who support the full array of AUMI programs. He also reports that all employees receive competitive pay and full employee benefits, including retirement. These claims were back-up by random employees with whom the researchers had discussions. All readily assert that salaries and benefits at AUMI easily rival or exceed comparable pay in city, county, and state government agencies. The researchers did not inquire about specific salaries. Officials would not provide information about the specific size of the AUMI budget, but indicated that a large portion of that budget was derived from Antioch North's practice of tithing back to the community (that is, the church contributes at least 10 percent of its annual budget to outreach and social service ministries). AUMI headquarters and main facilities are located in a strip of building along Northside Drive in Atlanta on land adjacent to and owned by Antioch Baptist Church North. This main facility complex houses administrative functions and staff, the Food Pantry, Clothes Closet, New Members/Christian Education Training, Computer Lab, and training facilities.

Despite the impressive number of programs and facilities which are operated and owned by AUMI, one easily gathers that AUMI is not a typical bureaucratic organization. For one thing, most of the employees at headquarters seemed energetically happy, fully at ease in their surroundings, and at peace as they went about their work. Secondly, there were no clear or rigid lines drawn between AUMI headquarters employees and members of the community who freely dropped in to

say hello, share news, or to touch base with individual employees. None of this appeared to disrupt the flow of work, or to antagonize AUMI staff or to put them at unease. In short, one easily discerns that AUMI is an integral part of the community which it serves in away in which most bureaucracies cannot be. In this regard, AUMI succeeds in being a very welcoming resource in the community.

The absence of a strong bureaucratic orientation is also evident in the way in which information is provided to those seeking to research AUMI activities. We should hasten to add that these researchers were not met with any hostility (although we were not able to get a response to our formal questionnaire). The point which we wish to make here is that AUMI officials have absolutely no sense of urgency about the need to report to anyone the accomplishments of its missions. They will respond to questions and readily volunteer much information, but in so doing they might just as easily omit much information which is critical to providing a wholistic view of their programs and their accomplishments. This is reflective of the fact that they feel that they serve God, and report to the church pastor and its governing body, who also serve God. Staff meetings are held weekly, with the pastor presiding, the individual who is clearly the earthly-bound spiritual leader and secular boss of this operation.

Summing Up: Insights and Findings from Dedicated Service Delivery Efforts

In this research we have examined two very substantial dedicated service delivery ministries operated by local African American church congregations through dedicated organizational entities. These two operations represent major

bureaucratic adaptations which these local congregations have made for the specific purposes of social service provision. These bureaucratic adaptations have been made at the initiative of the local congregations involved and not in response any involvement with government. These two operations represent significant contrasts while displaying major similarities as well. Both are operated by mega-churches (membership size of 5,000 and over), and this finding supported our early hypothesis that those churches with very large membership bases would be most likely to possess the financial resources, human capital, and organizational capacity necessary to sustain effective dedicated service delivery operations. Both of these operations have adopted missions which are deeply and unabashedly anchored in spiritual visions. Indeed, the spiritual visions lead these operational efforts.

Both operations offer an extensive array of social service ministries and charitable outreach activities which are primarily built on congregational resources derived from the church tithing back to the community a portion (at least one tenth) of its revenues. Some of their collective social service programs are leveraged by government support and some are not. Both operations host small federal and state government food assistance programs on a pro bono basis and both assist in qualifying recipients for these programs in accord with formal governmental regulations. Both host major food assistance programs of their own, in affiliation with the Atlanta Food Bank. The inner-city church, Antioch North, has greater emphasis on substance abuse related social services, reflective of the devastating impact of these problems on the larger community which immediately surrounds

their main church facility. Antioch North also provides programs designed to address the acute shortage of affordable and low-cost housing in the downtown Atlanta area. The suburban located operation, Green Forest Social Services, offered its services on a metro-wide basis and weekly delivers food assistance to inner-city homeless shelters, reflecting its concern for the plight of those very needy who are left behind in the inner-city. Given the numbers of participants benefitting from their food assistance programs, both operations meet substantial hunger needs in the Atlanta metropolitan area.

While AUMI had a blended focus on both more traditionally defined social services in conjunction with major economic activities, GSS separated these two functions into separate organizational entities. Thus there is no reporting here on the rather substantial activities of the separately organized Community Development Corporation which is fully operational at Green Forest Community Baptist Church. In addition to the fact that the specific missions of the charitable outreach efforts of these two churches are somewhat divergent in response to the demands of their immediate environments, it is also fair to say that AUMI very deliberately assumes a more activist political and social reform posture vis-a-vis local and national issues than does GSS.

Both of the dedicated social services delivery efforts examined here are impressive organizational entities with both the organizational structure and many operational routines which one would associate with formal bureaucracies. Although both are clearly supported by reasonably impressive sums of money, we

can easily conclude that the unknown size of AUMI's budget far exceeds that of GSS. Both are positioned to sustain a steady and significantly predictable revenue stream with which to support their programs. Although AUMI's programs are much more substantially leveraged with governmental funds, these are programs for which one would readily expect an ongoing demand , and they are programs which AUMI could discontinue (if it absolutely had to) without jeopardizing its organizational existence. In other words, although AUMI receives significant governmental support for some of its programs, it is not vitally dependent on such funding for its existence. Both of these dedicated service delivery efforts are anchored within a set of well-defined and impressive niche functions. While AUMI engages in a quite extensive set of activities, neither of these operations can be fairly accused of trying to do everything. They are both rather focused efforts.

AUMI has an impressive number of full-time and part-time paid employees while GSS operates with an almost skeletal staff of mainly volunteers. This latter fact is the one fact which gives pause in any assessment of the effectiveness of church-based social service delivery activities: these operations are almost always disproportionately supported by volunteers, whether they are engaged in the more episodic and seasonal services activities or whether regularized services are delivered via dedicated organizational entities. On the other hand, it is to be noted that these dedicated organizational efforts are substantially linked to local social service networks. Also, the commitment of these church-based efforts is not to be doubted as their services are overwhelmingly provided for non-members. These are

committed community service efforts.

These dedicated service entities are bureaucratic organizations, possessing many of the critical characteristics generally associated with formal bureaucratic organizations: strong and clear visions and missions; organizational structures well designed to carry out their chosen functions; formal and regularized routines; service delivery which is apparently consistent, predictable and reliable; exhibiting high levels of innovation in meeting their goals; and working with reasonable efficiency in that they accomplish a great deal with relatively limited resources. They are nonetheless, bureaucratic organizations with a big difference. They see themselves as having "a charge to keep and a God to glorify." They see themselves as doing God's work and as primarily and ultimately accountable to God, and somewhat accountable to their members and governing boards, who are also partners in "the charge." They both feel that government regulations are cumbersome, not always necessary and substantially restrictive. Officials in both of these organizations are significantly unconcerned about whether they are viewed as accountable and effective by the specific dictates of secular and academic notions of accountability and effectiveness. They are not callous in their attitudes; this is just something which they do not worry about. They are inclined to feel that everything that they do which involves specific individuals makes a significant contribution to the evolving wholeness of those individuals. Thus they are inclined to measure program effectiveness quite differently than would be dictated by social science theory and standards. This is an interesting difference for a bureaucratic

organization, but we are convinced that characteristic is not necessarily a major weakness.

Keeping The Charge: Two Faces of African American Church-based Social Service Provision

We have observed in the conduct of this research that all of the African American churches which we encountered share the impulse for social service provision and charitable outreach activities and that almost all of them engage in these activities at some level. This is not at all an unexpected finding. Such activities are an integral part of the "charge to keep" charitable ethos which is deeply rooted in most religious belief systems and they are an honored and historic tradition within African American congregations. The level and scale of involvement in social service provision and charitable outreach activities by these churches are significantly determined by the resource base of the congregation; that is the size of the membership, the overall revenue base available to support these activities, and the presence of individuals within the congregation who possess the expertise, interest, and available time necessary for developing and supporting diverse service activities. Churches generally are the penultimate "family businesses" and African American churches are no exception; they recruit from within, and ideas and projects are overwhelmingly generated from within.

By far, most of the social service activities in which these churches engage are provided on an episodic, ad hoc, seasonal basis. Yet, over time, there is a repetitiveness to the provision of these services such that most of these churches actually engage in a patterned set of service provisions. However, the patterned set

of services generally consists of narrowly defined and predictable activities such as food assistance, some emergency financial assistance, marital and grief counseling, visiting the sick and shut-in, and the like. An area of service activity which has been growing in recent years is that of computer training classes but this activity tends to follow the traditional ad hoc and seasonal pattern in availability. The narrow patterning of service provision leaves out a host of services which are of critical importance to the black community and the rather restricted set of support and counseling activities, in the main, omits such important issues as domestic violence and teen pregnancy among others. African American churches are almost totally alone in their service provision activities. In the main, they receive very little support from government or corporate sources, and they are generally not linked to government and charitable supported social service networks. These activities are also supported almost exclusively by volunteer personnel.

In a few instances African American churches have made major commitments and major bureaucratic adaptations to accomodate a high level of diverse social service provision. In this regard, they have established separate, organizational entities dedicated to social service provision. These operations have been undertaken as independent church actions, not in response to any specific requirements or dictates of government agencies. The dedicated social service entities tend to be impressive operations and tend to exhibit the critical characteristics which are generally associated with formal bureaucracies. In the main, they provide services in a consistent, predictable, reliable, and professional

manner. They too are disproportionately supported by church-based revenues, and overall, there continues to be a disproportionate reliance on volunteers in these efforts.

In sum, there are two faces of African American church-based social service provision. One is ad hoc, episodic, and seasonal, organized around a narrow set of activities. The other is embodied in more formal bureaucratic organizational structures with strong characteristics of predictability, reliability, and systematic delivery of a more diverse set of services. Both faces are significantly independent, funded substantially by congregational revenues with some leveraging of governmental funds; substantially unconnected to government and/or charitable funded social service networks; and disproportionately dependent on volunteer labor.

It is very telling , and grievously unfortunate, that such a small number of African American churches participated in this survey despite the gallant efforts of the researchers to obtain their participation. While we do not know the full meaning of this, it is a factor which is not to be overlooked in any assessment of the readiness and willingness of these churches to take on formal and expanded roles in government and/or charitable supported social service provision. It is to be noted that while large numbers of these churches maintain some level of professional staff support, they are not bureaucratic organizations designed to be responsive to survey research or many other externally generated activities which conflict with the execution of their core mission of "tending the flock."

Endnotes

1. Data for this section was obtained from personal interviews with the Executive Director of GSS, Mr. Bennie Boyd and conversations with other staff members held during winter and spring of 2000. Additional information was obtained from written materials provided by the staff of GSS.

2. Data for this section was obtained from personal interviews with the Executive Director of AUMI, Mr. Joseph Beasley and from conversations with other staff members conducted during the summer and fall of 2001. Additional information was obtained from written materials provided by the staff of AUMI.

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Appendix A
List of Churches Participating in Survey

Antioch AME Church
Rev. Dr. Stafford J. Wicker, Pastor
765 South Hairston Road
Stone Mountain, GA

Antioch Baptist Church North
Rev. Cameron M. Alexander, Pastor
540 Kennedy Street, NW
Atlanta, GA 30318

Berean Seventh Day Adventist Church
Rev. William L. Winston, Elder
291 Hamilton E. Holmes Drive, NW
Atlanta, GA 30018

Big Bethel AME Church
Rev. Dr. James L. Davis, Pastor
220 Auburn Avenue, NE
Atlanta, GA 30303

Calvary United Methodist Church
Rev. Vincent Miller, Pastor
1471 Ralph David Abernathy Blvd., SW
Atlanta, GA

Church of The Master Presbyterian
Rev. Paul Roberts, Pastor
3400 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, SW
Atlanta, GA 30310

First African Presbyterian Church
Rev. Mark A. Lomax, Pastor
5197 Salem Road
Lithonia, GA 30038

First Congregational
Rev. Dr. Dwight Andrews, Pastor
105 Courtland Street, NE
Atlanta, GA 30303

Greater Piney Grove Baptist Church
Rev. William E. Flippin, Sr., Pastor
18709 Glenwood Avenue, SE
Atlanta, GA

Green Forest Community Baptist Church
Rev. Dr. George O. McCalep, Pastor
3250 Rainbow Drive
Decatur, GA 30034

Hoosier Memorial United Methodist
Rev. Wimbley Hale, Jr., Pastor
2545 Benjamin E. Mays Drive, SW
Atlanta, GA 30311

Jackson Memorial Baptist Church
Rev. Gregory A. Sutton, Pastor
534 Fairburn Road, NW
Atlanta, GA

Light of The World Christian Tabernacle International
Rev. Dr. Jimmie Lee Smith, Archbishop
2135 Shamrock Drive
Decatur, GA 30032

Lindsey Street Baptist Church
Rev. Anthony Motley, Pastor
881 North Avenue, NW
Atlanta, GA

Masjid Al Farooq
Zahid Abdullah, Imam
442 14th Street
Atlanta, GA

Mt. Moriah Baptist Church
Rev. Michael D. Woods, Pastor
1983 Brockett Road
Tucker, GA 30084

New Beginning Full Gospel Baptist Church

Bishop James A. Morton, Pastor
923 Valley Brook Road
Decatur, GA

New Love Missionary Baptist Church
Rev. H. H. Dyer, Pastor
758 Dill Aveneue, SW
Atlanta, GA 30310

Paradise Baptist Church
Rev. Dr. Jesse J. Walker, Pastor
1711 Bankhead Highway, NW
Atlanta, GA 30318

Radcliff Presbyterian Church, USA
Rev. Lloyd Green, Jr., Pastor
290 Hamilton E. Holmes Drive, SW
Atlanta, GA 30318

Ray of Hope Christian Church
Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Hale, Pastor
3936 Rainbow Drive
Decatur, GA 30034

Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church
Rev. Dr. Nic Harvey, Pastor
2828 Wesley Chapel Road
Decatur, GA

Word of Faith Family Worship Center
Rev. Dale Bronner, Pastor
2435 Ben Hill Road
East Point, GA 30344

Victory Baptist Church
Rev. Dr. Kenneth Samuels, Pastor
1170 North Hairston Road
Stone Mountain, GA

Appendix B
Questionnaire
Social Service Ministries and Charitable Outreach Activities of African American Congregations in Metropolitan Atlanta

GENERAL BACKGROUND

1. What is the full name of your church?_____

_____

2. What is the name of the Senior Pastor?_____

3. What is the denominational affiliation of your church?_____

4. Does your church have more than one location? ___Yes ____no

The address at location #1 is_____

_____ How long at this address?_____

The address of location #2 is_____

_____How long at this address?_____

5. What are the times of worship services and average attendance at each?

Sunday/Average Attendance	Weekdays/Average Attendance
_____/_____	_____/_____
_____/_____	_____/_____
_____/_____	_____/_____

6. Does your church:

____mainly serve the immediately surrounding community

____have a membership which is more spread out

7. In terms of socio-economic status, how would you describe the community immediately surrounding your church?

Location #1	Location #2
___solidly middle class	___solidly middle class
___a mix of middle and working class	___a mix of middle and working class
___more working class	___more working class
___largely low income	___largely low income

*8. What are some of the major problems in the local community surrounding your church?

Location #1 Please make check-offs on Attachment A

_____

Location #2 Please make check-offs on Attachment A

_____

9.What are the major problems within your congregation which you seek to minister to?

Location #1_____

_____

Location #2_____

_____

***10. SOCIAL SERVICE MINISTRIES AND OUTREACH**

Please review Attachment B and check-off all social service ministries which your church currently offers, or has offered within the past 18 months.

11. Generally, what percentage of your total social service ministries are provided to people from the community who are not members of your congregation? _____%.

12. Specifically, in terms of your Benevolent Offerings support, what percentage of those supported from this fund are non-members?_____%

13. In terms of logistics and manpower, how are your social service ministries and outreach supported? Check all that apply:

____by volunteers from among the membership

____by clubs and organizations within the church

____by paid staff

14. Does your church receive referrals for assistance from governmental, non-profit, or private social service agencies? List those agencies referring clients to your church:

_____

_____

15. list those social service agencies to which your church makes referrals or coordinates with:

_____

_____

16. Does your church operate an academically grounded school (not daycare)? ___Yes ___No

How long has the school been in operation? _____

What grades are served at your school? _____

17. Does your church own/operate housing for senior citizens? ___Yes; (___total units) ___No

18. Are there any particular services which you would like to provide, or would provide more of, if the funding were available? _____

_____

19. Do you receive support from corporations for any of the social service and outreach which you provide? List programs and corporate sponsors_____

_____

20. Does your congregation currently receive any support from government for the many social services and outreach which you provide? ___City/county ___State ___Federal

21. Which programs are supported by government funding?_____

22. Have you heard of the Charitable Choice Program? ___Yes ___No

23. Does your church currently participate in programs funded under Charitable Choice? _____

24. How do you think that the Charitable Choice Program could be beneficial to your church?

_____

25. Overall, how do you feel about Charitable Choice?

___Very Interested in participating if solid funding is made available

___Interested, but the State of GA does not seem to be interested in reaching out to churches

___ question whether the benefits will be worth the hassles of working with government

___Just don't think that churches should be expected to take on these type burdens

26. Do you think that it is a good idea for the social services of a church to be supported by government funding? ___Yes, it's O-K ___No, it's not a good idea

27. Does your church currently have 501 (c) (3) status? _____Yes _____No

28. Does your church serve as a source of meeting space for civic or community groups such as those listed below? Check or list all that apply:

___Alcoholics Anonymous

___NAACP/Urban League

___Support Groups (e.g cancer survivors, etc.)

___Community-wide meetings

__Others_____

29. Please list other connectional or linkage associations and affiliations of your church such as:

Ministerial Alliances_____

Clergy Networks_____

Ecumenical/Interfaith Groups_____

City-wide/Neighborhood Coalitions_____

Credit Unions_____

Community Development Corporations_____

Other_____

30. How would you describe the involvement of your congregation in local public affairs? That is are you likely to get involved in issues such as public schools, zoning issues, public safety, etc.?

___continuing involvement ___involved as needed ___rarely involved

31. Although ministers cannot endorse candidates for political office, during the most recent past election season did any political candidates attend your services for the express purposes of being seen and to greet worshipers? ___Frequently ___Sometimes ___Rarely

32. Would you say that your church is "A Must Visit Church" for any serious contender for political office? ___Most definitely ___ depends on the contest/office ___No, we are low profile

MINISTERIAL CONVICTIONS

With the rise of televangelists, there are many different doctrines and beliefs being taught today. We would like to know more about the theological and philosophical convictions of African American pastors. Please check the option which most closely matches your sentiments as Senior Pastor.

33. Churches are too focused on the after-life and do not spend enough time on improving the material conditions of people's lives today.

___Strongly Agree ___Agree ___ Disagree ___Strongly Disagree ___No Opinion

34. Poverty is part of The Curse. It is a curse to be poor.

__Strongly Agree ___Agree ___Disagree ___Strongly Disagree ___No Opinion

35. There is too much emphasis on the "Prosperity Gospel" in today's theology.

___Strongly Agree ____Agree ___ Disagree ___Strongly Disagree ___No Opinion

36. The Liberation Theology which was strongly espoused during the sixties and seventies still holds meaning for African Americans today?

___Strongly Agree ____Agree ___ Disagree ___Strongly Disagree ___No Opinion

37. Generally, The Church needs to do a better job of teaching the basics of the faith and denominational doctrines so that people will be clear about what it is they believe.

___Strongly Agree ___Agree ___Disagree ___Strongly Disagree ___No Opinion

38. The Black Church must do a better job of dealing with human sexuality in its many forms.

___Strongly Agree ___Agree ___Disagree ___Strongly Disagree ___No Opinion

39. The role of the black minister in the leadership of the black community is even more critical today than it was during the days of the civil rights movement.

___Strongly Agree ___Agree ___Disagree ___Strongly Disagree ___No Opinion

40. The black church can be a major force in the economic development of the black community.

___Strongly Agree ___Agree ___Disagree ___Strongly Disagree ___No Opinion

CHURCH CHARACTERISTICS

41. In what year was your congregation originally founded?_____

42. Is the senior pastor of this church: _____a full time position? _____a part-time position?

43. Has your congregation ever purchased a main worship facility from a predominantly white congregation? ____Yes; Date of Purchase _____ ____No such purchases ever made

44. How many members do you currently have on your church rolls?_____

45. In terms of church growth, is your membership:

_____relatively stable

_____growing moderately

_____has experienced major growth in the past 2 years

_____aging, and experiencing a declining membership

46. In terms of socio-economic status, how would you describe the majority of the membership of your congregation?

Location #1	Location #2
___solidly middle class	___solidly middle class
___a mix of middle and working class	___a mix of middle and working class
___more working class	___more working class
___largely low income	___largely low income

47.What percentage of your membership is Caucasian/White?_____

48. How international is the make-up of your membership? Check all that apply:

____ significantly international, but mainly from the Caribbean

____we have a small but growing number of people from different parts of Africa

____we have some Asians

____we have some Hispanics

*49. What is the total number of individuals employed both full and part-time by your church?_____ Please complete Attachment C

50. What is the average number of volunteers who support the work of the church on a weekly basis (not including those who participate in worship services)?_____

51. How many buildings make up the church property at the site of its main worship center(s)

Location #1_____ Location #2_____

52. How many additional properties off-site does your church own? Please list and give their use:

Property Use/Function

53. Does your church currently operate business enterprises which are designed to provide employment and training opportunities for your membership and the local community?

____Yes (Please name them)

____No, but we currently have plans to start up such enterprises within the next 3 years

54. Does your church have a: ___ radio ministry? ___ T.V ministry?

55. Does your church have an e-mail address? _____

56. Does your church have a web page?_____

HOW WELL IS THE PASTOR TREATED?

57. Please indicate the types of support which are provided annually by your congregation for the senior pastor:

Fixed Monthly Salary	___Yes	___No
Pension Contribution	___Yes	___No
Health care Benefits	___Yes	___No
Parsonage/housing allowance	___Yes	___No
Paid Vacations	___Yes	___No
Travel Allowance	___Yes	___No
Entertainment Allowance	___Yes	___No
Automobile purchase/lease	___Yes	___No

Attachment A: Social Problems Local Community

Which of the following social issues are a significant problem in the community within a 1 mile radius of the church location?

Social Problem	YES	NO
Poverty		
Unemployment		
Poor quality public education		
Illiteracy		
AIDS/HIV		
Substance abuse		
Drug trafficking		
Homelessness		
Teen Pregnancy		
Limited Transportation		
Prostitution		
Substandard or Lack of Affordable Housing		
Lack of affordable child care		
Lack of affordable health care		
Gang violence		
Youth incarceration		
High traffic/traffic accidents		
Crime		
Family violence		
Lack of recreation		
Loss of local industries/jobs		
Racial tensions		
Regentrification		
Other, please specify		

Attachment B

INVENTORY OF SOCIAL SERVICE MINISTRIES

NOTE: Please check all ministries which your congregation has provided at any time within the past 18 months. If we have not listed ministries provided by your congregation, please list them at the end of this inventory.

Full Name of Church_____

1. Do your specialized ministries to children and youth include any of the following?

____Day care
____Head Start
____After School Programs
____Tutoring Programs

____Recreational Programs
____Summer day camps for children or teens
____Cub Scouts/Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts/Brownies
____Big Brother/Big Sister Mentoring Programs
____Leadership Training

2. Do you offer specialized ministry to the poor and needy include any of the following?

____Job Search
____Vocational training
____Food pantries
____Soup kitchens

____Clothing Closets
____Shelters for men, women, children
____Habitat for Humanity
____Meals on Wheels

____Financial Assistance to poor or elderly
____Transportation for poor or elderly
____Recreational programs to elderly
____Prison Ministry
____Housing programs--
Do housing programs include building and rehabilitation initiatives, collaboration with CDCs. Collaboration with other groups to provide housing, zoning appeals, loans for housing

3. Do your family counseling programs include any of the following?

____Domestic Violence Counseling
____Teen Pregnancy Counseling
____Child Abuse Prevention
____Suicide Prevention

____Bereavement Counseling
____Pre-marital counseling
____Ministry to the recently divorced
____Parenting skills classes
____**Singles Ministry**

4. Are there any support groups that meet regularly at your church?_____
Do they include any of the following?

____Mothers Against Drunk Driving
____Alcoholics Anonymous
____Narcotics Anonymous
____HIV/AIDS
____ALANON

____Alateen
____Overeaters Anonymous
____Loss of a child--support group
____Loss of a spouse--support group
____Health related support groups--cancer, Alzheimer etc. Please specify_____

5. Do you permit other civic groups to use the church facilities for meetings?
Which of the following organizations have done this within the last 18 months?

____Neighborhood Associations
____Protest organizations--please specify _____

_____

____NAACP
____National Urban League
____Other civil rights groups--please specify_____

_____

____Fraternities and Sororities
____Interfaith collaborations
____Interracial collaborations
____Police/community relations meetings

____Local fraternal groups (Elks, Masons, Eastern Star)
____Others_____

6. We are interested in the outreach ministries of your church that might be aimed at improving the health of the congregation and the community. Which of the following do you offer?

____Parish/regional health program
____Hospice care
____Sick and shut in care
____Ministry to physically or developmentally handicapped

____Health screenings--please specify_____

_____

____Health education--please specify_____

____Immunization
____Dental clinics
____Medical clinics

____Exercise classes

____Dieting classes
____Nutrition programs
____Blood drives
____Organ donation awareness
____Hospital visitation

7. In what other ways has your church worked to strengthen the viability of the community? Has your church engaged in any of the following?

____Consumer counseling
____Community credit union
____Legal assistance programs
____Co-ops (food, babysitting, health)

____Neighborhood cleanups/civic beautification programs
____Environmental programs
____GED (High school equivalence programs)
____Adult literacy programs

____Scholarships for students in need
____Computer training classes
____Commercial venture by church (retail business etc.)
____Congregational (or support of) crime watch

____Community policing support
____Disaster relief
____Assistance to immigrants
____Entrepreneurial training/small business development
____Community bazaars and fairs

8. Are there any organizations in your church which are dedicated to confronting the following issues?

____Voter Registration
____Gun violence prevention
____Civil Rights and social justice
____Racism and affirmative action

____Affordable health care
____Pro-life advocacy
____Women's issues
____Family values

____Poverty/welfare rights advocacy
____Environmental Action
____Peace activism
____Gay and lesbian issues

____neighborhood drug problems
____Crime
____Police Brutality
____Public schools improvement

Attachment C
Church Personnel Profile

Position	Number persons in position	Full Time Paid	Part Time Paid	Regular Volunteer
Pastor				
Associate Ministers				
Administrator				
Secretary				
Maintenance				
Treasurer/ Bookkeeper				
Musicians				
Academic Teachers				
Social Program Directors (daycare)				
Counseling Staff				
Media Specialist Tapes/TV/Radio				
Security				
Bookstore				
Others please specify				
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

Appendix C
Top 10 Reasons for Low Response Rate

Based on the insights gleaned from this research experience and insights from conversations from knowledgeable individuals including fellow social scientists and some clergy, we have identified what we feel are the ten key explanations for low rates of responses to survey research by African American pastors/churches:

1. Social services and/or charitable outreach activities are not the main story for most African American churches. While we believe that most African American churches share an impulse towards benevolent activities, only for a few of them do these activities rise to a level which lends itself to being reported in a reasonably complex story.
2. The core functions of churches fully occupy the time and attention of many pastors and their staffs. Core activities such as funerals, visiting the sick and shut-in, providing bereavement and marriage counseling and the like frequently occupy huge chunks of time for church staff. These core functions must be added to basic regularized functions such as preparing for worship services and handling the fiscal and maintenance operations of the church which frequently consume the time of paid and volunteer staff.
3. Many African American churches continue to rely disproportionately on part-time, volunteer staff support, thus limiting the range of activities in which they can comfortably engage.
4. African American churches are very much pastor-centered organizations. Very

few activities, no matter how trivial, are conducted without the specific instruction and approval of the pastor. Thus unless the pastor specifically makes a decision that a church will complete a questionnaire and unless he/she specifically designates someone to handle the responsibility with his/her oversight, it will not be completed.

5. Despite the indicators of professionalization of staff, most African American churches are not the type of bureaucratic organizations which are designed to respond to survey type inquiries from any source. Indeed some pastors indicate that they do not even respond to survey and inquiries from their own denominational organizations.

6. Many African American pastors are distrustful of researchers and research of any kind, especially when inquiries are connected in any way to any level of government. University (and government) research ethics requirements for obtaining signed Informed Consent Forms frequently exacerbate this prevailing distrust. This is an interesting irony and unintended effect of research ethics provisions.

7. Many African American pastors have limited appreciation for social scientists and social science methods, and a few are disdainful of social science and its practitioners, sometimes particularly so when researchers are affiliated with predominantly white universities. This is an interesting contradiction as the presence of African American faculty in predominantly white institutions is one result of the civil rights struggle in which African American pastors and churches so eagerly participated in the past.

8. In many instances, success in anything with an African American Church involves tapping the right individual (even in persuading the pastor to cooperate on any specific matter). Who that right individual might be and how to identify them is, of course, a mystery to outsiders, and to many insiders as well.

9. The African American church community is a very relational community. Thus, many African American pastors require the establishment of a true personalized relationship and the building of a level of personal comfort which is untenable within the time constraints of conducting social science research or any business transaction in which the pastors are not clearly in charge. We were constantly asked "Are you one of my members?"

10. Frequently misguided political considerations contribute to non-responses. Many African Americans pastors consider any information about their church activities to be politically significant and they thus are reluctant to share such information, choosing instead to remain individually in a position to make potential political impacts themselves. Such beliefs about the likelihood of social science researchers "stealing the political thunder," while somewhat flattering, constitute greatly exaggerated notions of just who listens to research findings from social scientists and greatly overestimate the extent to which typical social scientists actually seek to be a part of the political arena in activist roles.